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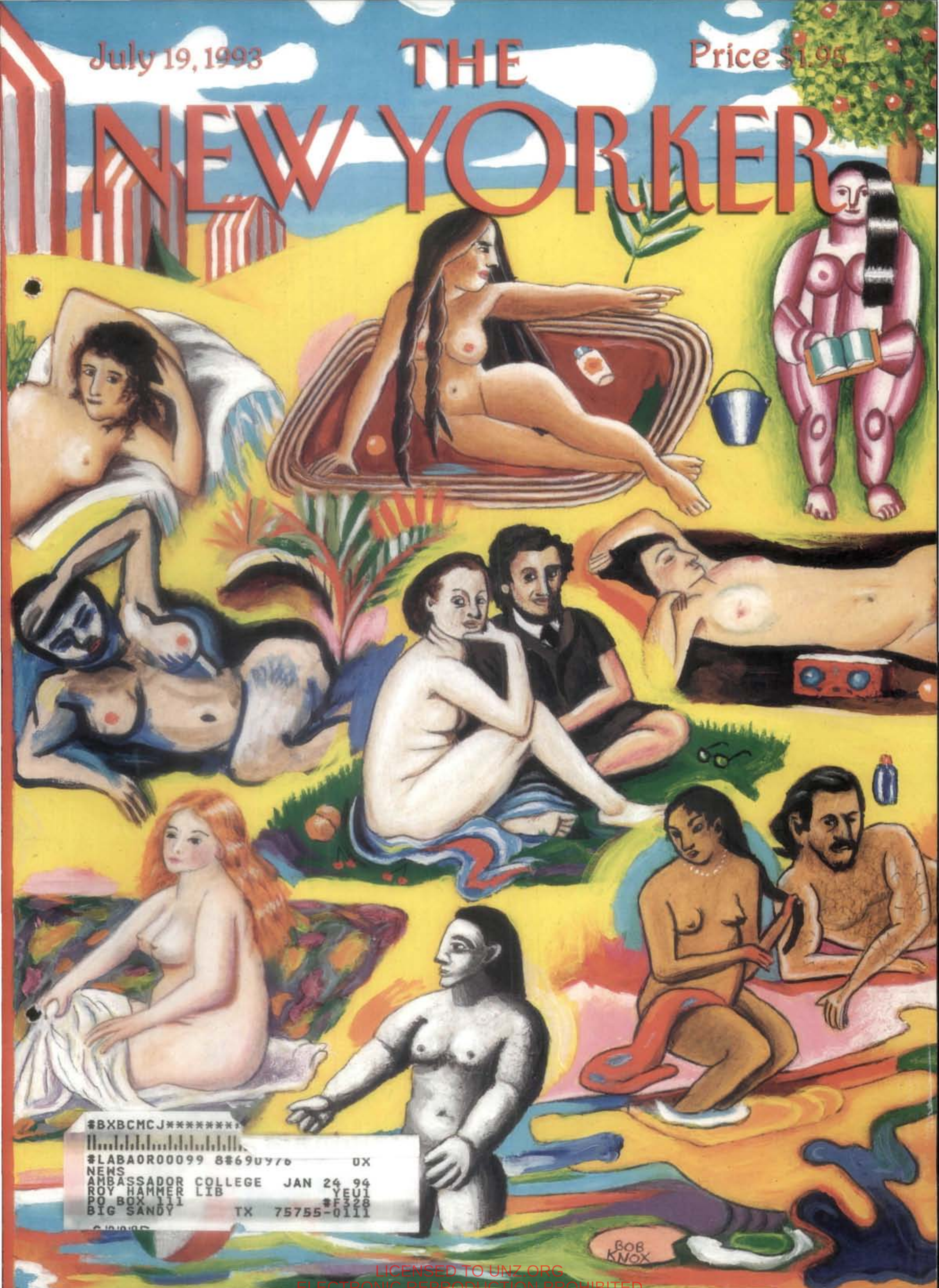

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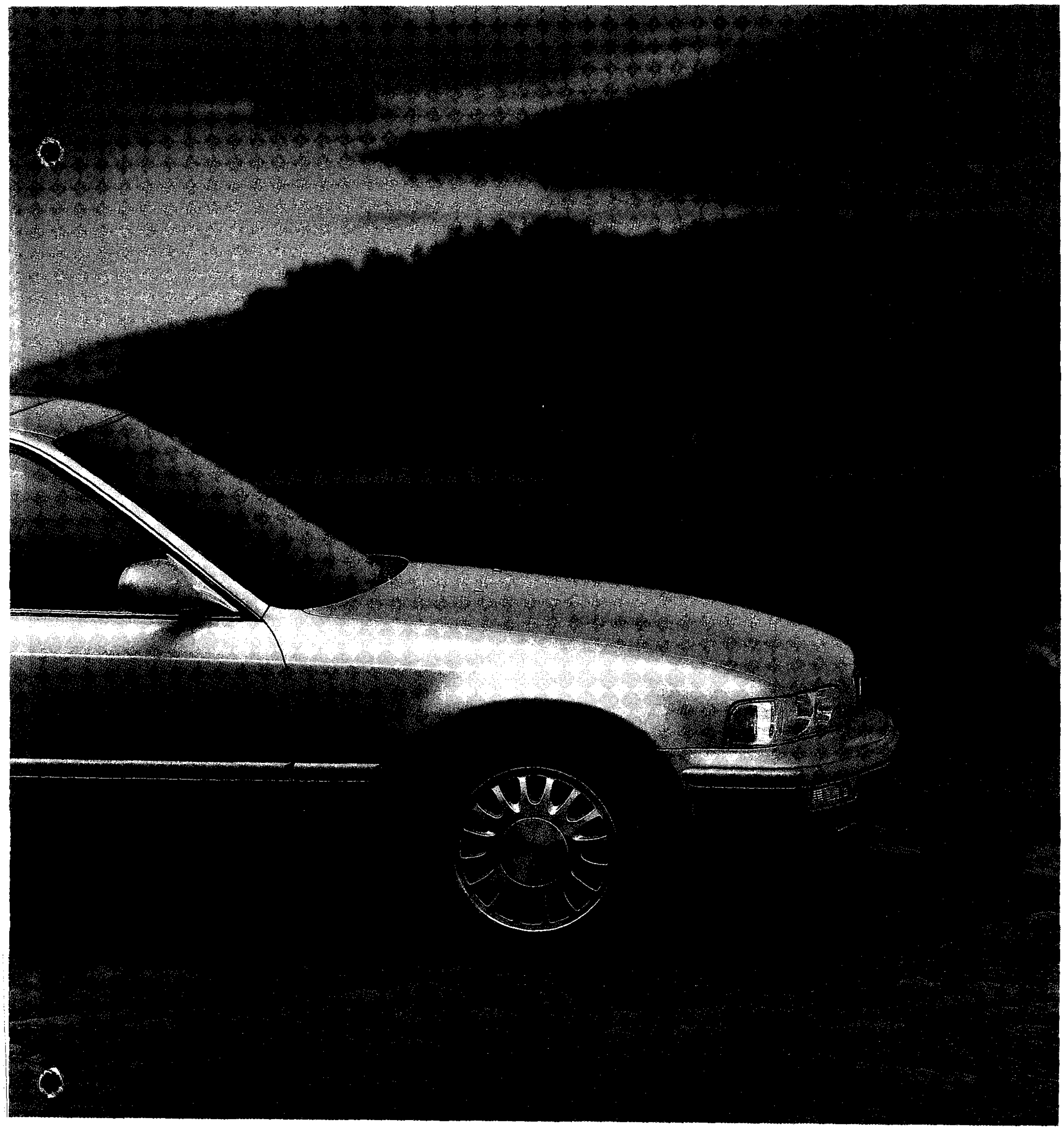

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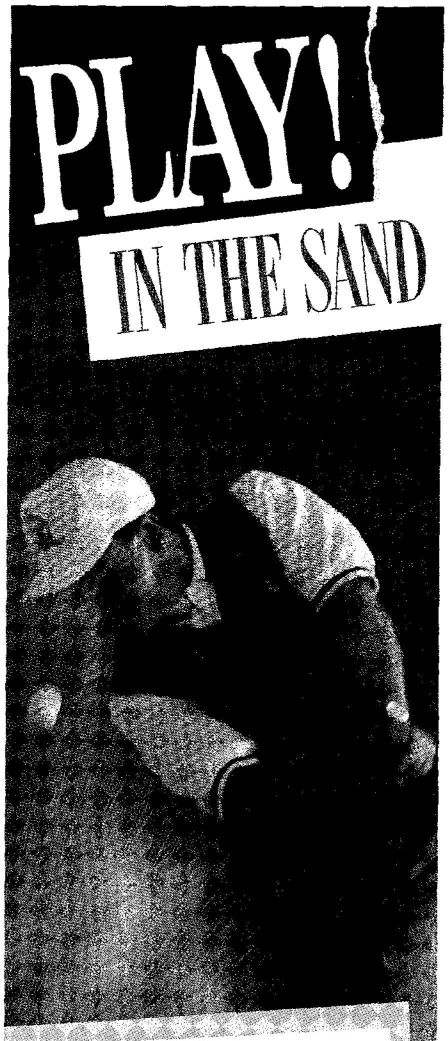

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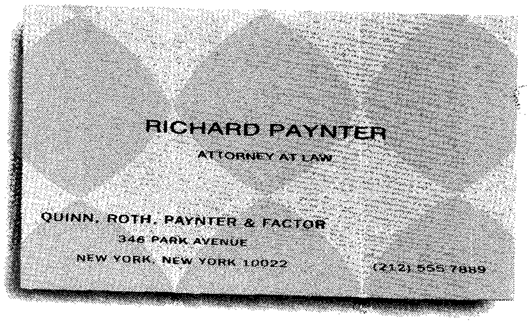

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COMMENT

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

WHENEVER the agricultural industry is feeling misunderstood by consumers, which is quite often, it likes to point out that less than three per cent of Americans are farmers. And it's true that few Americans today know where or how their food is grown, or know anything else about it before it turns up, looking luscious, in the supermarket display case. Most of us, in fact, would *prefer* not to know. But as a result we have little or no control over what we eat. Like everything else, food has politics, and debate over food tends to be dominated by ideology. On the one side are food technologists, who want to increase yield and lower costs, and on the other are environmental advocates, who want to insure that our food is as safe as it can be. The credulous public is usually caught in the middle. A classic food fight took place recently in the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, in the form of letters between Bill Moyers, who narrated a "Frontline" special, broadcast in March, that indicted the Environmental Protection Agency for its convoluted system of regulating pesticides, and Dennis Avery, a researcher at the Hudson Institute, who wrote an editorial denouncing the broadcast. The Avery editorial went as far as to declare DDT a safe, useful pesticide that should never have been banned.

Technology is changing our eating habits at a pace not seen since the nineteen-fifties, when frozen foods became popular. The first genetically engineered food, a tomato, which is the subject of an article by John Seabrook in this issue, is scheduled to appear in the supermarkets this fall. Bovine growth hormone, a genetically engineered microorganism that increases milk production, is now being studied by the Food and Drug Administration. And irradiation of meat to kill bacteria is again being considered by the United States Department of Agriculture, following the discovery last winter that *E. coli* in Jack in the Box hamburgers had killed three children in the Seattle area.

An earlier food scare, the 1989 tempest over Alar, which was sparked by a "60 Minutes" broadcast about a Natural Resources Defense Council report on pesticides in children's food, led to con-

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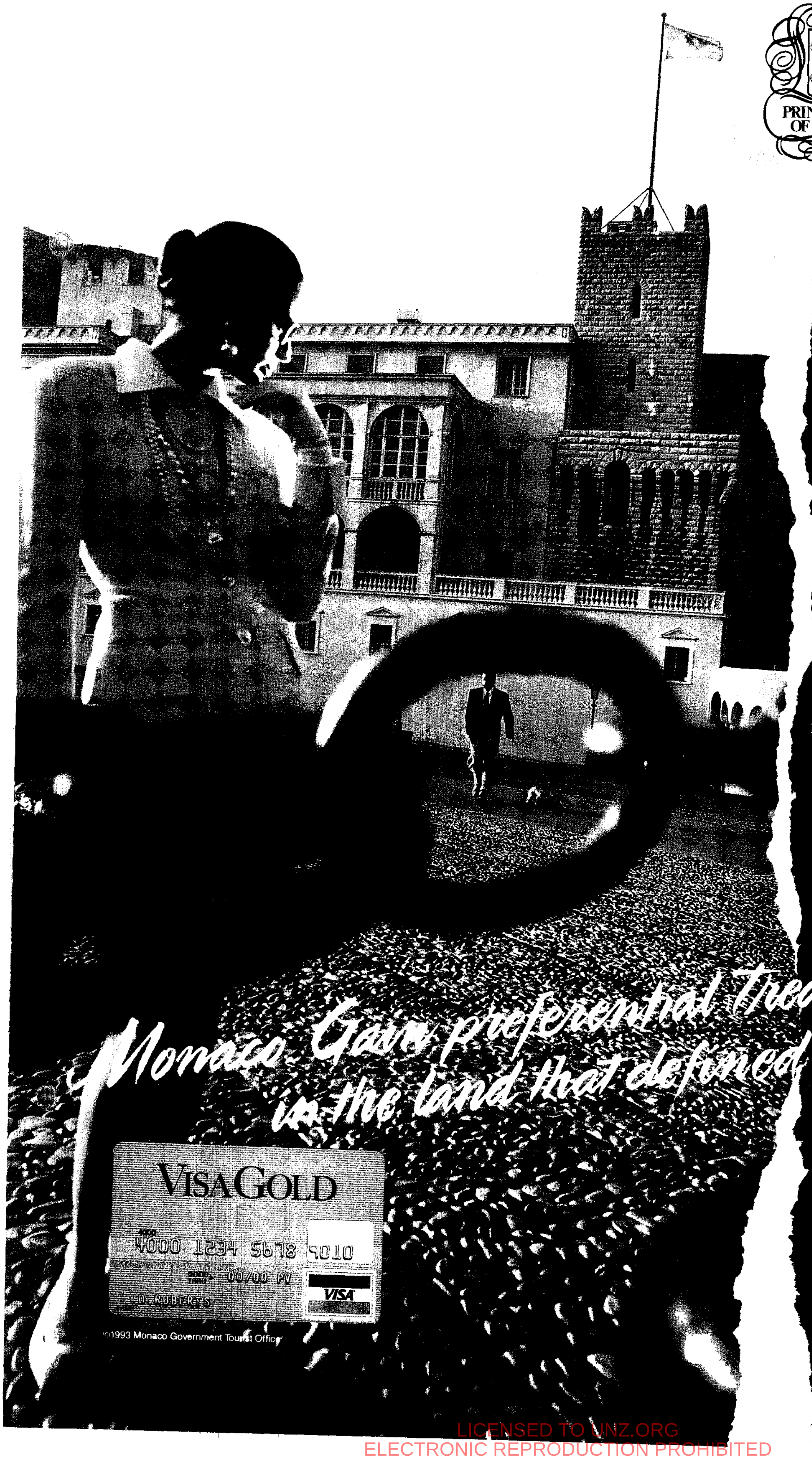
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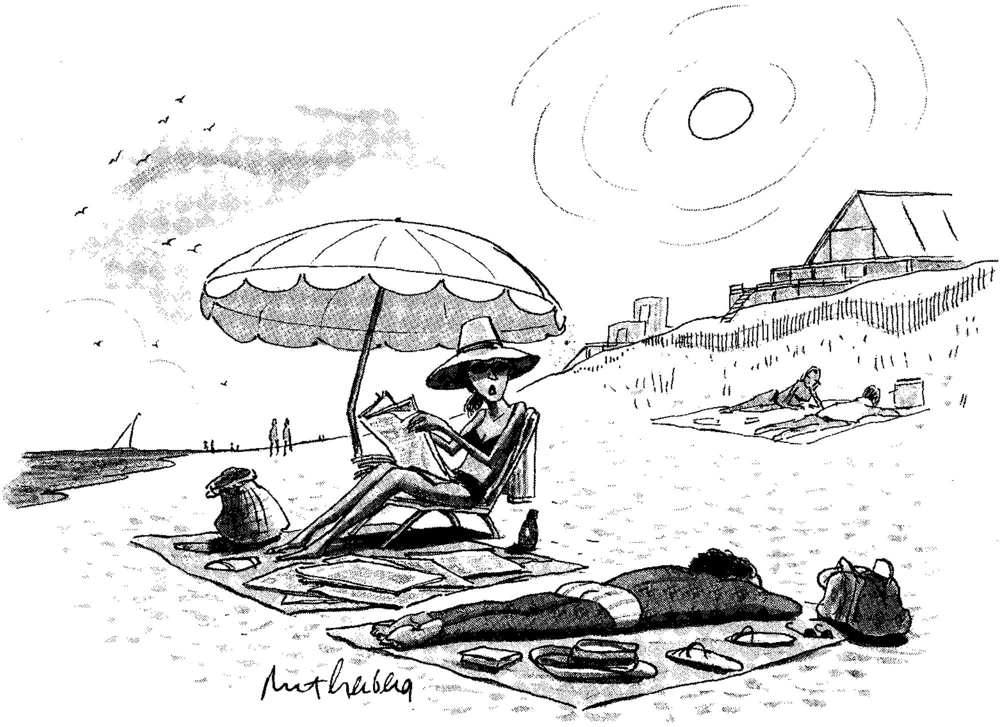
gressional hearings on the practices of apple growers, featuring earnest testimony by Meryl Streep about the possibility that apple juice and applesauce were carcinogenic. The industry countered with respectable scientists who said that Alar was perfectly safe and with pictures of Washington State apple farmers whom they claimed Streep had put out of work. The public, which hadn't really wanted to have to worry about whether Alar, a chemical that causes apples to achieve the ideal degree of ripeness you see in the supermarket, was dangerous or not, quickly went back to eating apples. (The actual toxicity of Alar is still in dispute.) In recent years, the environmental activist Jeremy Rifkin has achieved a Ralph Nader-like status in consumer affairs almost entirely by raising alarms about what is being done to our food. And in order to counter people like Rifkin the agricultural industry has sponsored anti-food-defamation legislation. In Louisiana, Idaho, and Georgia, it's currently a civil offense to impugn the reputation of food in public unless you can prove that what you're saying is true.

Now comes "Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children"—a five-year study conducted by the National Research Council and sponsored by the E.P.A. The report, published last month, establishes that children and adults are exposed to quantitatively and qualitatively different levels of pesticide residue. When the report was released, the chairman of the committee in charge of the study, Philip Landrigan, who is a pediatrician at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, stated, "The major conclusion of this study is that the federal government's decision-making process for pesticides does not pay sufficient attention to the protection of human health, especially the health of infants and children," and he added later, in an interview, "While there are some chemicals to which children are less sensitive, for the majority of chemicals there is no question that they are more vulnerable because of their smaller size and because they are still growing. Children are very vulnerable." The data in the report are mostly offered without interpretation. (On page 313, for example, it's mentioned that lanolin, a wool derivative that breast-feeding mothers often rub on their chapped nipples, was found in one test to contain residues of sixteen different pesticides left over from the chemicals in which sheep are dipped to kill the vermin in their fleece. And that's all it says about that.)

For months prior to the report's appearance, the agricultural industry had been making plans for a food-safety emergency. "We were very concerned about this thing causing a massive food-safety scare," John McClung, an industry spokesman, said recently. To the industry's great relief, it appears that the scare will not occur. Instead of a spasm of hysteria, there seems to be a collective shrug—the flip side of the public's irrational behavior in regard to food.

Partly to minimize the shock of the report, the Clinton Administration issued what it called "a major landmark in the history of food safety." This wa[illegible]a joint statement, by Carol Browner, Mike Espy, and David Kessler, the respective heads of the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Food and Drug Administration, that the Administration is committed to a drastic overhaul of the way the government regulates pesticides. "We will intensify our effort to reduce the use of higher-risk pesticides and to promote integrated pest management," it said. The statement was remarkable for two reasons—first, because its tone was non-defensive (through most of the Reagan-Bush years, the government refused even to acknowledge that pesticides were a problem), and, second, because the three agency heads made it together (infighting among the agencies has always been one of the great hindrances to pesticide reform).

In response to the N.R.C. report and the Administration's statement, people on both sides of food politics are behaving in an uncharacteristically reasonable way. The environmental advocates are not using the report to inflame public concern over food. "Food scares only serve the interest of the status quo," Richard Wiles, the director of an agricultural-pollution-prevention project of the Environmental Working Group, said recently. The industry, which has resisted reforming pesticide regulations for twenty-five years, is saying, through John McClung, "There is a feeling perhaps the time has come to mo[illegible]ernize food-safety laws," and "We are prepared to work with the advocates on this," and "Nobody wants to go down the Alar road again." This is good news if it means an end to the kind of Cold War confrontation that has polarized the politics of food. But the public has to take the trouble to educate itself about food. What we don't know *can* hurt us. ♦



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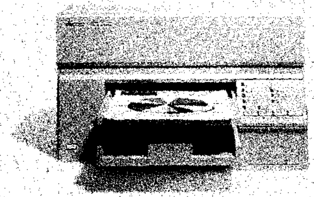

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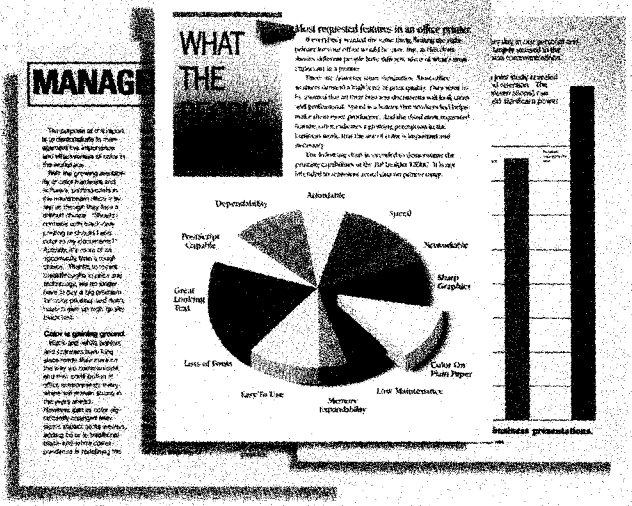
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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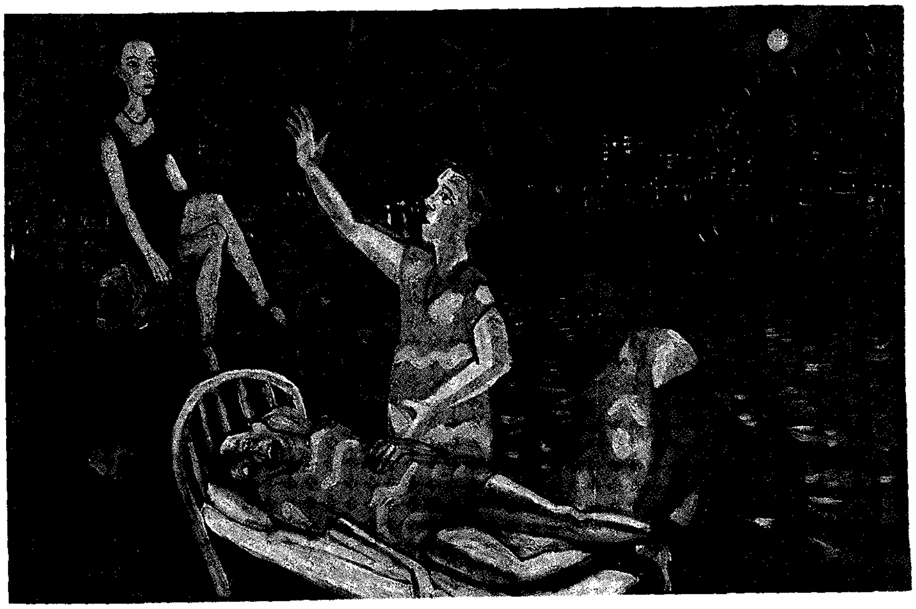
THE THEATRE

Plein Air

If there's nothing really new about the idea of taking theatre out of ordered indoor spaces, then why does the experience of watching the En Garde Arts production of "Orestes" seem so refreshing? In part, it's a function of the "theatre" itself: a forlorn, far from level playing field adjacent to a twisted steel ruin along the Hudson River at 59th Street. In larger part, however, it's a function of the feelings that arise while watching actors move about the "site-specific" setting. You feel liberated from formal theatregoing responses—the need to pay attention at all costs, even when the performance unfolding in front of you is stupefyingly boring.

Which is not to say that this "Orestes" is dull. Far from it: its director, Tina Landau, and playwright, Charles L. Mee, Jr., seem determined to accommodate MTV-era attention spans with a variety of arresting son-et-lumière effects. The story of Orestes and his sister Electra cannot help but be familiar, though: it's *the* primal soap opera, a fact reinforced by the inmates-taking-over-the-asylum style of En Garde's production. Unlike plays done in conventional theatres, however, where the least longueur can make you resent mightily the price of admission, the slow patches in "Orestes" can induce gratitude. You're thankful for the chance to shift your focus away from the stage and reflect indirectly upon the play's theme of civility versus chaos, a reflection that is abetted by the setting: the cool, ordered lights of New Jersey in front of you, the sirens of the West Side Highway behind.



"Orestes" at Penn Yards.

JOE DAVIS

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Annie Warbucks—The sequel to "Annie." With Kathryn Zaremba, in the musical's title role, Harve Presnell, and Donna McKechnie. The book is by Thomas Meehan, the music is by Charles Strouse, and the lyrics and direction are by Martin Charnin. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

In the Summer House—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Jane Bowles' 1953 play, with Alina Arenal, Frances Conroy, Kali Rocha, Jaime Tirelli, and Dianne Wiest. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Measure for Measure—The thirty-eighth season of free Shakespeare in the Park opens with this production, which features Kevin Kline, André Braugher, Lisa Gay Hamilton, and Blair Underwood. Previews through July 17. Opens July 18 at 8 and runs through July 25. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counterrevolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. Not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Blood Brothers—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. Willy Russell, whose credentials are good, wrote book, music, and lyrics, to no avail. With Con O'Neill, Stephanie Lawrence, Jan Graveson, and Mark Michael Hutchinson. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Camelot—"Camelot" is made of sturdy stuff, and it's a good thing, too, given this production's direction and set design. Robert Goulet rises far above his surroundings and has created a worthy successor to his Lancelot. As for the rest of the cast, between the wood-nymph ballet and the madrigal ballet and the slo-mo fights anyone would be hard-pressed to be credible. Even so, it's still "Camelot," and Goulet is convincingly Arthurian. Just close your eyes and listen. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Fool Moon—Bill Irwin and David Shiner are the inspired clowns in a show that is perfection itself. The only sound you'll hear is [illegible] merry music of the Red Clay Ramblers and the abundant laughter of the audience. (3/8/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Forbidden Broadway 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. This edition is as funny as its predecessors. Among the new shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls" and "Falsettos," and the holdovers include "Les Misérables" and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the clever writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Allison Briner, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the performers, doing a large assortment of roles. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

The Goodbye Girl—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short, two brilliant, funny stars, transform this otherwise indifferent musical adaptation of Neil Simon's movie into a sporadically festive evening. Score by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by David Zippel. Michael Kidd directed. (3/15/93) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!—A cast of nine in sixteen musical numbers. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally, a star performance by Brent Carver, as the heroic homosexual window dresser, and another by the redoubtable Chita Rivera, in the title role. Under Harold Prince's direction, the action is always lively and often witty and tender. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb, the setting is by Jerome Sirlin, and the costumes are by Florence Klotz. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Loose Knit—Theresa Rebeck has written a series of scenes about the heterosexual trials and tribulations of five New York City women who are members of a knitting circle. The scenes are funny, but they are hitched to a meandering, inconsequential plot. As in last year's "Spike Heels," however, Ms. Rebeck says very little very well. The actors are lively and believable (Mary B. Ward and Daniel Gerroll, as a sleazy bachelor plutocrat, stand out), the jokes are perceptive, and the evening is pleasant. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes July 31.)

Nostalgia Tropical—A revue of Afro-Cuban music from the thirties, forties, and fifties, featuring Meme Solis. (Blue Angel, 323 W. 44th St. 262-3[illegible])

Orestes—A play by Charles L. Mee, Jr., based on Euripides' version of the final days of the House of Atreus. The site-specific production is presented by En Garde Arts. Jefferson Mays and Theresa McCarthy lead a cast of nineteen. (Penn Yards, one block west of Twelfth Ave. and 59th St. Closes July 18. For reservations, call 274-8123.)

A Perfect Ganesh—To say that this play of Terrence McNally's tells the story of two middle-aged women from Connecticut making what turns out to be a pilgrimage through India barely indicates its richness of invention or the humor that keeps breaking through its underlying sadness. The acting does credit to the dramatist, which is saying a lot. Zoe Caldwell plays a matron, enthusiastic in manner, who is all

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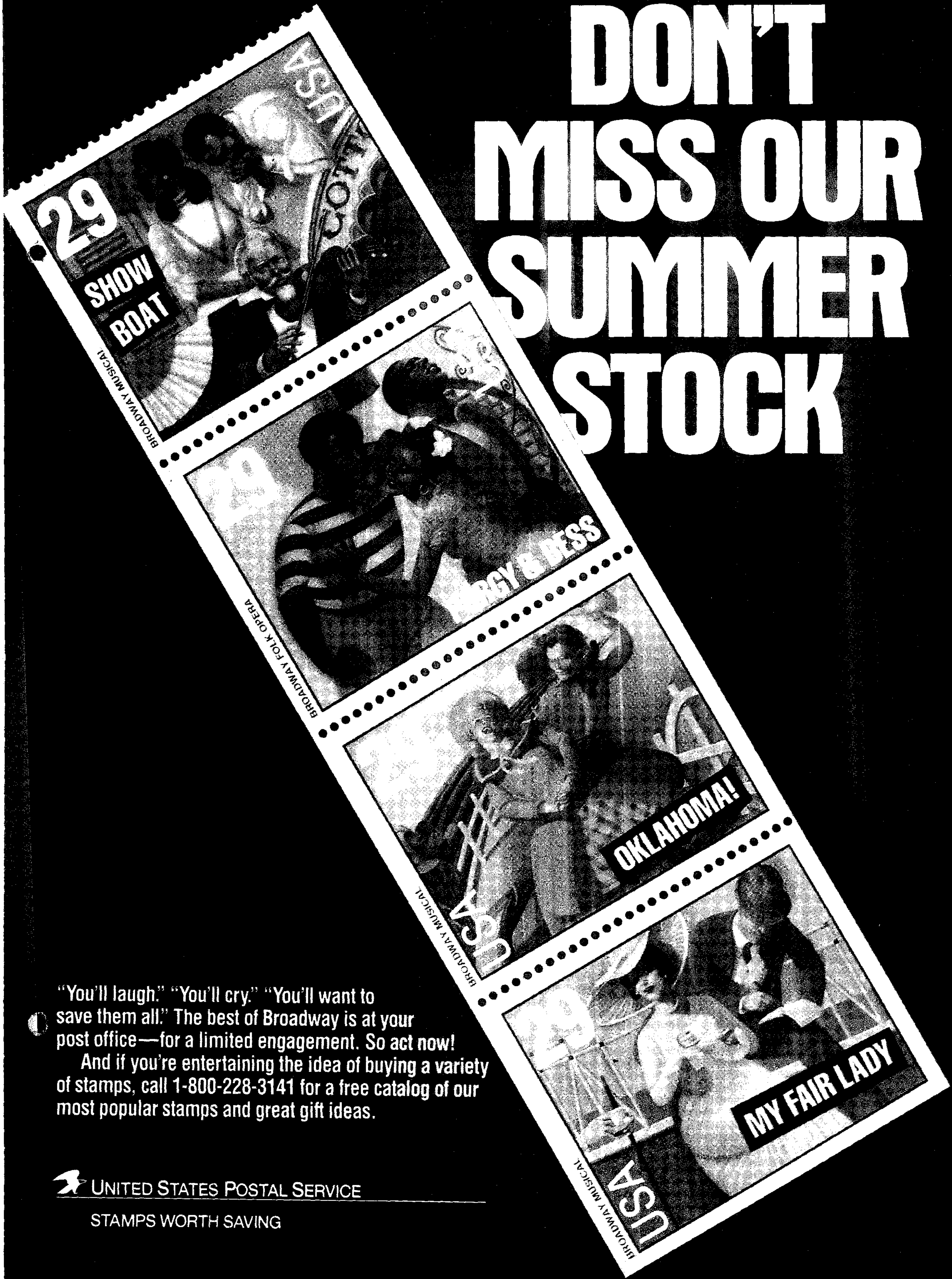
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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

but torn apart by strong emotional contradictions, and the primness of Frances Sternhagen, as her travelling companion, is a camouflage that almost conceals her fears and courage; in support, Fisher Stevens shows admirable adaptability as every man in the cast, and Dominic Cuskern, as the Hindu god Ganesha, is a source of innocent and not so innocent merriment. John Tillinger directed. (7/12/93) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Playboy of the West Indies—Mustapha Matura transplants John Millington Synge's "Playboy" from Ireland to Trinidad. That it survives the move so well is due, in part, to Mr. Matura's poetic fluency in wielding the local patois, and, in part, to the distinguished cast, under the direction of Gerald Gutierrez. With Victor Love. (5/24/93) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes July 25.)

Prime Time Prophet—A musical satire about televangelists, by Kevin Connors and Randy Buck. (Players Theatre, 115 Macdougal St. 777-7474.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare, which she delivers with eloquence and emotion. This essentially serious evening is often as amusing as it is sad. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

She Loves Me—This revival of the musical by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick, a charmer thirty years ago, barely survives a clunky production. Even so, the score and lyrics hold up, as does the book by Joe Masteroff; the company, headed by Boyd Gaines and Judy Kuhn, as a couple of secret pen pals in a Budapest *parfumerie* in 1934, performs well, under difficult circumstances. (6/28/93) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

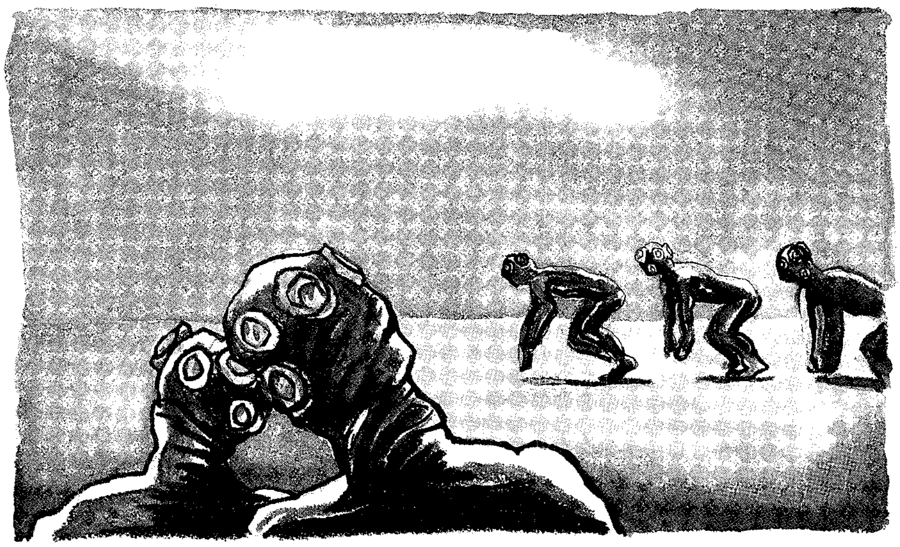
The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's latest play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Three Hotels—This new play by Jon Robin Baitz is no more than a technical exercise, but what technique! Debra Monk and Ron Rifkin are superb as husband and wife; the versatile Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill, but director Des McAnuff's production is caught on the horns of a theatrical dilemma that no amount of slick, exhausting spectacle can resolve. The hero, that deaf, dumb, and blind kid, is spectacularly passive, and thus unreachable, unknowable, and essentially undramatic. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.



Taylor 2 at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.

STEPHEN LACK

DANCE

Ice Angels

During most of the nineteen-sixties and part of the seventies, the champion figure skaters Oleg and Ludmila Protopopov dominated international pairs competition, amassing ten gold medals at amateur and professional meets, including two Olympics (1964 and 1968). Since their defection from the Soviet Union in 1979, these uncompromising stylists have kept in fighting trim. Just four years ago, at the 69th Regimental Armory, they could still rivet a crowd, simply by the way they shifted their balance from one blade edge to the other in the course of gliding, and by their timing of a single lift. Currently, they are compiling film footage of some of their twenty-four-karat performances into a video. You may think of classical dancing when you see it; if so, you'll be on their wavelength. For most of their illustrious career, they've been thinking of it, too.

The Protos (as the couple are known to their admirers) didn't begin to study ballet—indeed, to skate together—until they were in their twenties, yet from the beginning they shared a childlike ability to block out everything that wasn't essential to their aims. When they attended the ballet, they used that ability at full strength. From a warhorse such as "Les Sylphides" they learned to harness virtuosity in service of a larger, lyric effect. From ballerina vehicles such as "The Dying Swan" they learned the appeal that ballet can have when the smallest of technical details seems to be irradiating the power of inner life—a quality that Oleg reverentially calls "oneness." On ice, this quality isolates the couple like a halo; off the ice it also sets them apart. At a recent evening in their honor, conceived by the Ice Theatre of New York, a speaker recalled once posing this question to Oleg: "How do you separate your skating and your marriage?" Oleg answered, "Our marriage *is* our skating." The Protos themselves appeared to be the only people in earshot who didn't crack a smile.

IN TOWN

Pilobolus Dance Theatre—Final performances of the engagement. July 14 and July 17 at 8: "Bedtime Stories," "Axons," "Clandestiny," "A Portrait," and "Day 2.". . . ¶ July 15 at 8 and July 17 at 2: "Untitled," "Alraune," "Walklyndon," "Solus," "Slippery Hearts," and "Sweet Purgatory.". . . ¶ July 16 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Duet 1992," solo from "The Empty Suitor," "Televisitation," and "Rejoyce: A Pilobolus Finnegans Wake." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance—Opening performances of a "Nikolais! Remarkable Retrospective." July 19 at 8: "Crucible," "Blank on Blank," "Persons and Structures," and "Tent.". . . ¶ July 20 at 8: "Noumenon," suite from "Kaleidoscope," "Tensile Involvement," and "Totem." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through July 31.)

Opus Dance Theatre Company—A program of ballet, African, jazz, and modern dance. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. July 17 at 3 and 8, and July 18 at 3. Tickets at the door on the days of the performances.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—July 14 and July 17 at 8:15, and July 15 at 2: "Jewels.". . . ¶ July 15 at 8:15: "Swan Lake," "Glinka Pas de Trois," "Duo Concertant," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet.". . . ¶ July 16 at 8:15: "Allegro Brillante," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," "Agon," and "Vienna Waltzes.". . . ¶ July 17 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Ballo della Regina," "Tzigane," and "Stars and Stripes.". . . ¶ July 20 at 8:15: "Chaconne," "Scherzo à la Russe," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," and "Vienna Waltzes." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs. 1-518 587-3330. Through July 24.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 14-15 at 8, July 16 at 8:30, and July 17 at 2 and 8:30: Paul Taylor Dance Company. . . . ¶ July 16 at 7: Taylor 2. . . . ¶ July 16 at 8, July 17 at 5, and July 18 at 7: Danny Grossman Dance Company. . . . ¶ July 20 at 8: Mark Morris Dance Group. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

Starry Nights

It takes a brave performer to face the perennial threat of being upstaged at Rainbow & Stars, the compact *boîte* that shares the sixty-fifth floor of 30 Rockefeller Plaza with the Rainbow Room. The competition, of course, is the view: a dizzying panorama of Queens, the East River, uptown Manhattan, the Hudson, and New Jersey. After a few glasses of champagne on a summer evening, with the city lights twinkling on and distant airplanes floating like fireflies across an indigo sky, you can begin to imagine that the room is suspended from an Art Deco airship, like the red-and-black Norman Bel Geddes model that hangs down the hall in the Promenade Bar.

The cabaret singers who appear at Rainbow & Stars can't ignore the view, so their sensible strategy usually involves linking the visual glamour to the sophistication of the show tunes and standards that predominate. That's what Laurie Beechman, a charmingly emotive Broadway veteran in the Streisand-Marcovicci mold, did with a gee-whiz sweep of her arms one evening during her recent engagement here. (The current show, "The Night They Invented Champagne," is an ebullient Lerner and Loewe revue, featuring four singers.) None of this giddiness comes cheap: a seven-ounce club soda goes for three dollars, and a glass of champagne, which your waiter will be glad to refill without your asking, goes for eight-fifty. And don't bring your MasterCard, Visa, or Discover cards, because cash and American Express are the only ways to escape to ground level.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and nightclub proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**KT SULLIVAN,** who will hold forth in the Oak Room through July 17, delivers show tunes in a clear, never-faltering soprano voice. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Some bars cater to a specific clientele, but Arthur's is a free-for-all. It's a small, strange Village bar that looks like a pack rat's attic. In the back is a compact, bar-encircled stage, where one can usually find patrons listening to, cheering on, and joining in with the musicians. Sundays belong to Lee Lorenz and his band.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams. **CHARLES BUSCH** is currently on hand for an extended run. **JULIE HALSTON** will join him for a week, through July 20. Closed Mondays.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the

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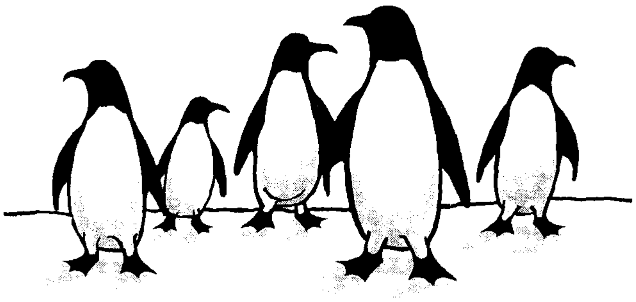

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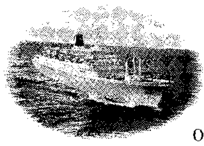

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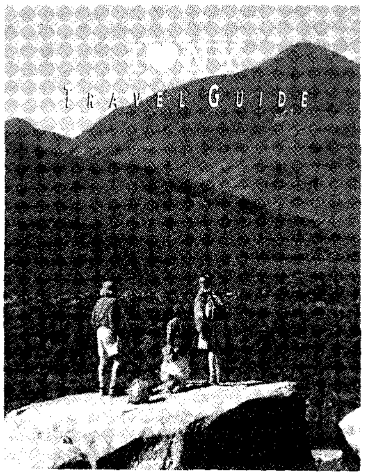

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

biggest names in jazz. **TOM SCOTT** performs through July 18. *Dining.*

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club used to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes, but now it's an eclectic and hard-to-figure-out venue for the good, the bad, and (sometimes still) the great. **ALISON KRAUSS AND UNION STATION** are here on July 15. Krauss, a young fiddler and singer from Champaign, Illinois, has released a couple of fine country-bluegrass records in the past few years, and has lent her talents to recordings by Dolly Parton and Michelle Shocked, among others. **ZACHARY RICHARD,** a wonderful Cajun-flavored songwriter who writes about pirates, wistful romance, and working-class hard times, appears on July 17.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to burn brightly here. On July 19, several acts from the Bar None Records stable will perform. The small Hoboken label, which sprang They Might Be Giants and Freedy Johnston on an unsuspecting world, seems to have a knack for finding quirky talent, whether it's the touchingly odd acoustic duo **DRINK ME** or a rock band like the **HEALTH & HAPPINESS SHOW,** which will both be here, along with other Bar None artists.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz grotto. The **BUDDY DEFRANCO AND TERRY GIBBS** quintet is here through July 18. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. You can either vibrate up front, near a wall-o'-speakers, or lounge around the bar in the back and follow the show on a video monitor. The **POSIES** and **HYPNOLOVEWHEEL** share a bill on July 15. The Posies, who come from Seattle but are not a "Seattle band," write shamelessly grand hooks that conjure up late-sixties pop at its finest. On their irresistible new album, "Frosting on the Beater," they counterweight prettiness with scruffy guitar work and an aggressive rhythm section. Their lyrics can be pompous, but their songs are so great that you may not care. Employing a classic two-guitar attack, Hypnolovewheel recalls the dB's at their best. Their surprising chord changes and goofy humor can give way to sublime moments of pure pop melody, yet they can match fuzz boxes with the best of the grunge scene.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but that's part of its appeal. July 15: The **STEREO MC'S** offer buoyant beats, groovy lyrics, and a kind of floating, meditative, and very British approach to hip-hop dance pop. July 17: **RICK SPRINGFIELD.** For concert information, call 249-8870. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. **GEORGE KELLY'S JAZZ SULTANS** claim July 18. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The club most likely to feature an electric-rake player. Run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, the Knitting Factory books all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. **LYDIA LUNCH** is here July 15-16. **JOHN LURIE'S NATIONAL ORCHESTRA** appears July 17-18.

La Cave on First, 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)— Though situated in the basement of an Upper East Side Mexican restaurant (Pancho Villa), this is an establishment worth checking out. There's nothing trendy or even distinguishing about it, and that may be the secret of its appeal. The entertainment varies, from tap dancing one night to gospel the next.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret with plenty of niceties, if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and an amazing view. A summer-long Lerner and Loewe revue, called "The Night They Invented Champagne," is currently under way, with **MAUREEN BRENNAN, EDDIE KORBICH, JULIET LAMBERT,** and **MARTIN VIDNOVIC.** Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's castoffs, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples who remember how to dance. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Society jazz band, Tuesdays to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird orchestra, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Terry Waldo & the Gotham City group, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. **ASTRUD GILBERTO** is here through July 15. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine where you have to pass within inches of the stage to reach the rest rooms. A group led by **VALERY PONOMAREV** is in action through July 18. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** appears on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—With the opening of the Chestnut Room, this legendary tourist haven is making a bid to attract serious jazz fans. The club, which resembles a hunting lodge, is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings have been impressive. Through July 18: **MEREDITH D'AMBROSIO & EDDIE HIGGINS.** Dining.

Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar and lounge appointed with satin couches, mosaic tables, and Arabian-style fixtures. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muraled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored stamped-tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. July 15-16: **SON SEALS** and **A. C. REED.** July 17: **STEVE JORDAN** y Su Conjunto Rio. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The **SHIRLEY SCOTT** trio performs through July 18. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Unbroken Circle

Reggie Wilson, a Brooklyn-based performer and choreographer whose work explores the possibilities of the human body as a percussion instrument, will be calling down the spirits of his ancestors when he presents a new work, "Shouting Rings," outdoors at Wave Hill on July 14 and 17. The piece is based on the ring shout, which was typically the finale of a revival meeting[illegible] variation on the African circle dance, it was developed after Southern whites, undoubtedly alarmed by the untrammelled physicality of plantation slave celebrations, banned dancing and the fife-and-drum music that accompanied it. The ring shout substituted clapping and singing for instruments, and the dancing became shuffling steps executed in intricate circular patterns. Wilson, who traces his roots back to eighteenth-century slaves, spent a year and a half researching the history of the form and looking for versions of it in prayer meetings, choir rehearsals, and church services in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas.

Wilson has recruited two professional dancers, an actress, and a member of his church to perform his interpretation of a ring shout. "It's not a re-creation," he said recently. "We don't have any film footage or pictures of ring shouts in the old times. But similar rituals are still being enacted in the South, and there are written descriptions in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources. We're using four hymns I heard at prayer meetings. The same song would be sung differently in different churches, and I'd put parts of them together with verses I'd get from my mother. My aunt Ceola or my great-aunt Geneva would remember the rest. The rhythm is the thing, and the way to get to the rhythm is the intensity. I'm interested in the possession, the ecstasy."

Serious Fun!—One of Lincoln Center's summer extravaganzas. At Alice Tully Hall. July 14-15: "Megadance," which features Wendy Perron (with percussionist David Van Tieghem), Pooh Kaye, Dance Brigade, María José Ribot, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, Lucinda Childs, and Charlie Moulton. . . . July 16: Susan Marshall & Company in two dance premières, as well as "Kiss," "Contenders," and "Untitled (detail)." . . . July 17: Em[illegible]gency Broadcast Network presents works that incorporate video and live performance. . . . July 20: La Compagnie Marie Chouinard, from Montreal, in an updated version of "The Rite of Spring." . . . ¶ At the Walter Reade Theatre. July 19: Belgian pianist-composer Wim Mertens. (All performances are at 8. For information about tickets, call 875-5050. The series continues through July 30.)

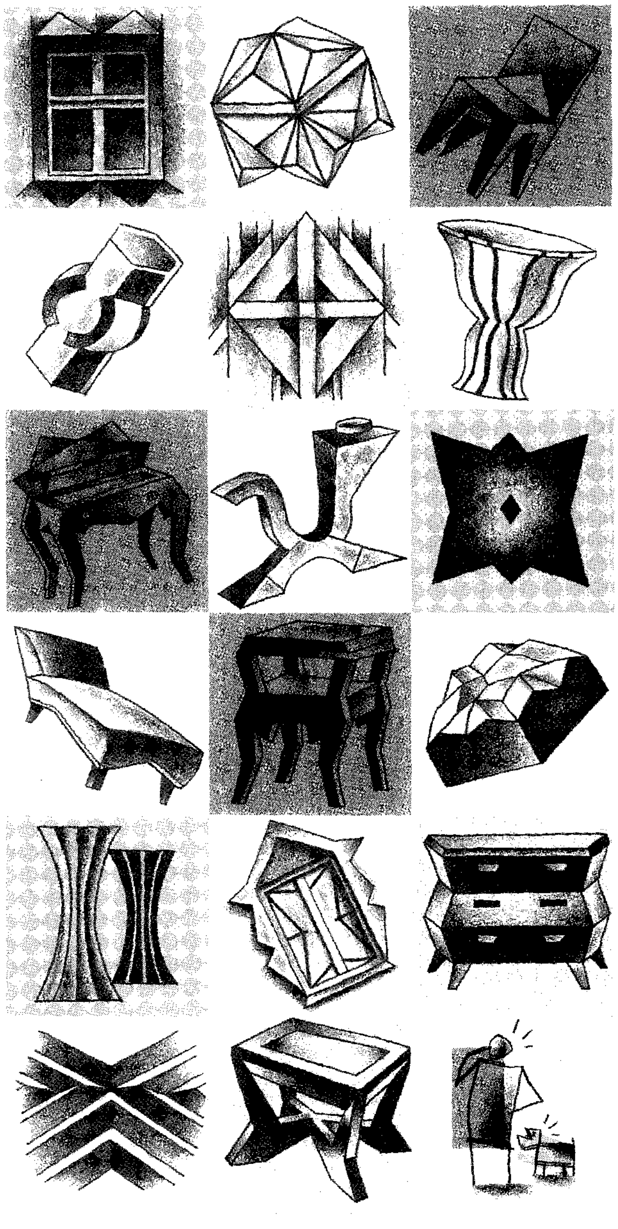
"Dances for Wave Hill"—Reggie Wilson, Irene Hultman & Ben Neill, and Muna Tseng kick off a summer series in this public garden in Riverdale. (Wave Hill, Independence Ave. and W. 249th St., the Bronx. July 14 at 6:30 and July 17 at 3. For information about tickets, call 989-6830.)

ART

Southern Exposure

“HOPPER IN PARIS,” the first installment in a Whitney Museum series called “Collection in Context,” is a fine example of a refreshed institutional genre: the unblockbuster. The show consists of twenty-five small-scale views of streets, bridges, buildings, stairwells, and courtyards that Hopper painted in his twenties during three sojourns in Paris, in 1906-07, 1909, and 1910. It is a sort of étude, formal and perhaps psychological, through which this artist, so closely associated with forlorn images of small-town and urban America just before and during the Depression, emerges as an alienated tourist as well.

The artist we find here is already the familiar one. The paintings are implacable, plainspoken. The obdurate Hopper, with few friends and little French to draw on, may even have been a bit depressed. The works are chromatically subdued, despite the ascendancy during this period of the flamboyant Fauves. Fauvism nevertheless seems to have had at least a subliminal effect on Hopper. “Le Bistro,” the most intense of the paintings, is suffused with the blinding light of Post-Impressionist and Fauvist landscapes. Hopper may have been looking at the sober Quai Voltaire, but it's as if the harsh white light of van Gogh's Arles or Matisse's Collioure were on his mind.



“Czech Cubism” at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

CATHY MILLET

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—“Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection.” This show, which features work from 1938 to 1967, seems almost comically tame in the light of Abstract Expressionism's initial reputation. Included are de Kooning, Motherwell, Pollock, Stamos, Tobey, and many others. . . . ¶ More than a hundred drawings from the J. Paul Getty Museum, with special emphasis on the Italian Renaissance. Included are Leonardo's delicate sketch of a child embracing a lamb (for a painting long since lost) and other works by Bernini, Bronzino, Mantegna, Raphael, and Titian. Through Aug. 8. . . . ¶ Forty examples of Persian tiles, from the twelfth century through the late nineteenth, in a snug, one-room exhibit. . . . ¶ The museum's first display devoted to historic baseball cards. . . . ¶ “A Masterpiece of Sculpture from Renaissance Florence: Verrocchio's Bronze Statues of Christ and St. Thomas.” (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The roof garden, featuring six large sculptures, a great view, and, for the first time, cappuccino, is open when weather permits.

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—In this exhibit of more than three hundred works by twentieth-century Latin-American artists, one rediscovers several lesser-known figures, most notably Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), a lively Cubo-Surrealist painter from Brazil, and Jesús Rafael Soto, the Venezuelan whose brilliant Op constructions, famous during the sixties, seem timely again. The younger generation, including Julio Galán, Guillermo Kuitca, Jac Leirner, and Ray Smith, is especially strong. . . . ¶ “Multiple Images: Photographs Since 1965 from the Collection” includes work by Jan Groover, Sol LeWitt, Duane Michals, and Charles Ray. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musical performances devoted to twentieth-century Latin America.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum presents the futuristic work of Rebecca Horn, a German artist who specializes in “mechanomorphic” installations. Horn's art incorporates all manner of objects and materials, from butterfly wings to pendulums to champagne—everything except old-fashioned paint and canvas. Among the many striking pieces here, perhaps the most ingenious is “Concert for Anarchy,” a mechanized piano hung upside down from the ceiling; the piano suddenly bursts open and then slowly retracts. The Goog is also screening Horn's films, including her most recent work, “Buster's Bedroom,” about a young woman's search for the spirit of Buster Keaton. . . . ¶ Two floors below but light-years apart, “Modern Masterpieces from the Permanent Collection,” which includes paintings by Cézanne, Gauguin, van Gogh, Mondrian, Miró, and Picasso, is reassuring evidence that “fine art” still lives. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

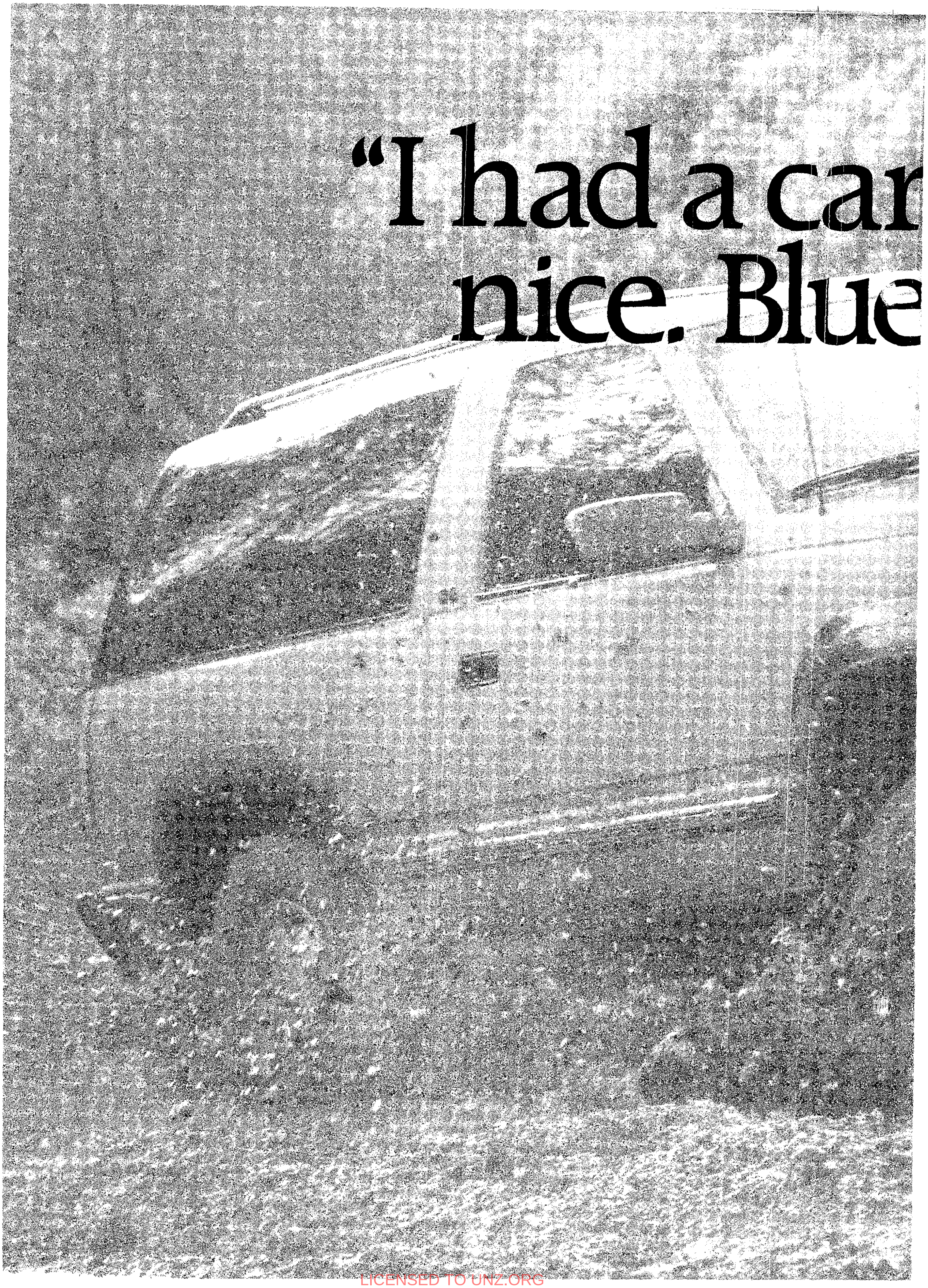
Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—More than seventy paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940) that demonstrate the confluence of traditional German graphic illustration (wherein the “real” is often portrayed as gruesome and bizarre) and color theory in his work. This is particularly clear in “Dance You Monster to My Soft Song!” (1922), with its absurd figure levitating in a field of canary yellow. The show also features work from Klee's fertile Bauhaus period. . . . ¶ “Singular Dimensions in Painting,” an exhibit of minimalist work, primarily from the fifties and sixties, includes Ad Reinhardt's infamous “Abstract Painting,” a matte-black canvas mounted in a matte-black frame; Robert Ryman's similar white paintings; Ellsworth Kelly's aptly titled “Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red”; and Mark Rothko's sombre color-field works. . . . ¶ A site-specific installation by Rebecca Horn. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 10.)

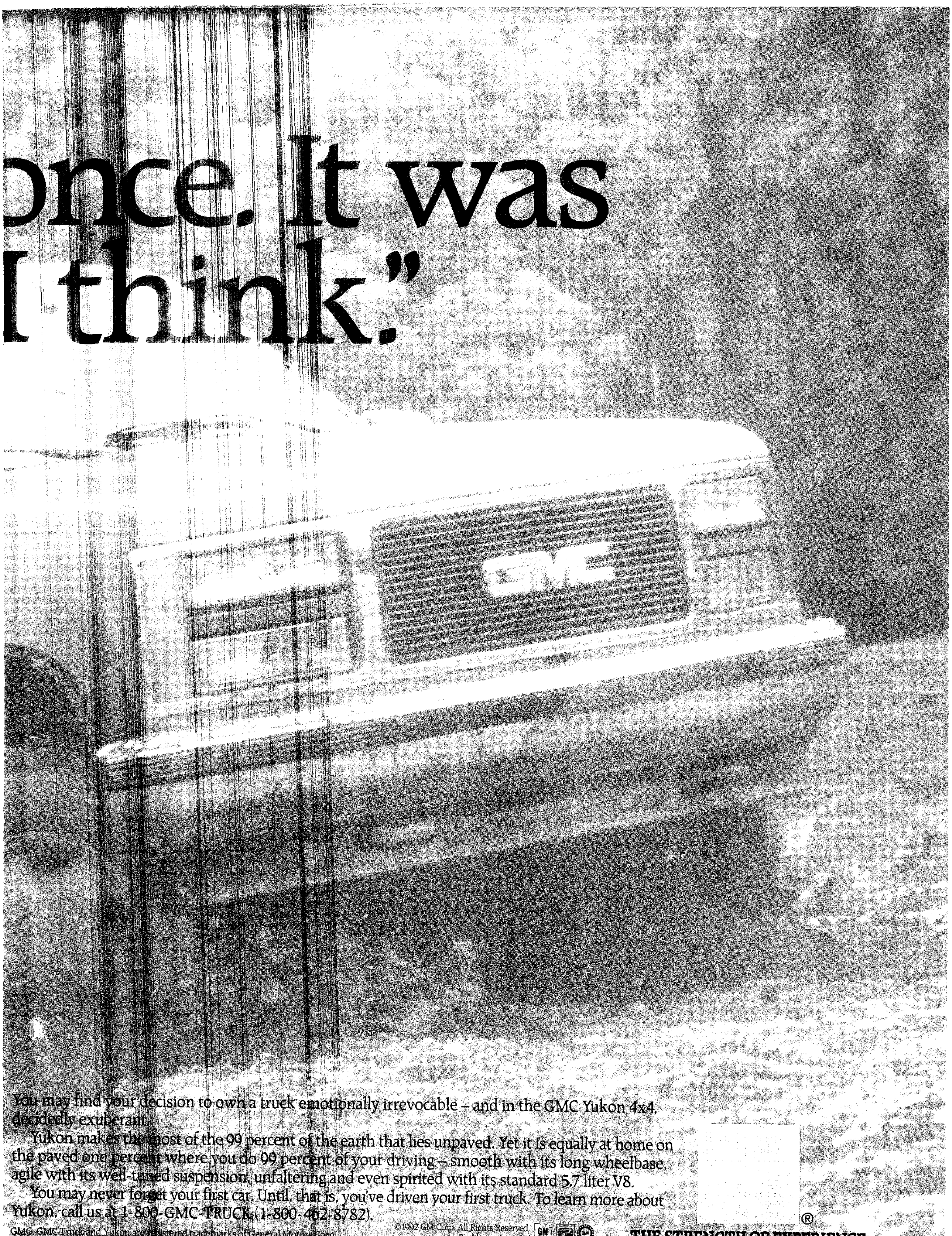
Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—“The Subject of Rape,” an installation that examines rape in art, history, law, and the media; and “Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art,” which explores the use of degraded materials, impurity, and excess. Through Aug. 29. . . . ¶ “Hand-Painted Pop: American Art in Transition, 1955-62” includes work by Lichtenstein, Ruscha, and Twombly. . . . ¶ “Collection in Context: Hopper in Paris.” (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—“Czech Cubism: Architecture and Design.” Most of the furniture and other household objects here were designed by architects, arguably as an exercise in taking their architectural principles to extremes that would have been impolitic in the case of most buildings. (Indeed, many buildings represented here by drawings were never actually built.) Though many of the objects are whimsical, there is nothing flimsy or silly or ugly about any of them; one of the pleasures of visiting the exhibit is choosing which of these uncommon bookcases and tables and chairs one would like to own. Through July 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—“Bears: Imagination and Reality.” The only large omnivores that inspire in *Homo sapiens* the simultaneous urge to hug and to flee, bears have fascinated North Americans ever since they (almost) gave up eating us. Black bears and grizzlies are on dramatic display in twenty-three new dioramas here; visitors can also admire a forty-claw necklace and watch video interviews with people who have survived close encounters with bears. . . . ¶ “The Hall of Human Biology and Evolution,” a new

"I had a car
nice. Blue





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permanent exhibition, includes a hologram of the interior of a woman's body, the world's largest array of pre-human and human fossil casts, a skeleton family watching TV, and a reproduction of an animal frieze from the cave of Lascaux. . . . ¶ "The Dinosaurs of Jurassic Park" features several life-size props created for Steven Spielberg, including a Tyrannosaurus rex, a triceratops, and a velociraptor. . . . ¶ More than fifty color photographs examining "The Pantanal: Brazil's Forgotten Wilderness," a floodplain "the size of Wyoming," home to rare and endangered animal and plant species. Through Aug. 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Organized as part of an ongoing "Master Artist" series, "Gertrud and Otto Natzler: Collaborations/Solitude" showcases the elegant contributions to twentieth-century ceramics of this husband-and-wife team. . . . ¶ A retrospective exhibition of four decades of work by artist, inventor, and teacher Paul Soldner. . . . ¶ "Edible Drawings" by John Cage. Experiments in handmade paper by the late composer. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Second Dimension: Twentieth-Century Sculptors' Drawings." More than seventy-five works from the museum's permanent collection, including figure drawings by Louise Nevelson and Isamu Noguchi. . . . ¶ Donald Lipski's installation, "Pieces of String Too Short to Save," has transformed the entire lobby into a vast junkyard. There is no string in sight, but everything else you can think of—books, bicycle reflectors, truck tires, cassette tapes, dust mops—is hung on the back wall or piled on the floor. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Artists in the Marketplace" features thirty-five emerging New York artists. . . . ¶ "Another Perspective: Selections from the Permanent Collection." (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St.—"From the Inside Out" showcases eight contemporary international artists, including Christian Boltanski (photographic assemblages) and Nancy Spero (heroic women in history), whose work explores the individual experience of Judaism. . . . ¶ Prints, drawings, and other works on paper, by Alice Aycock, Marc Chagall, Max Liebermann, Jules Pascin, and others, in "Collecting for the Twenty-first Century: Recent Acquisitions and Promised Gifts." (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Home and the World." This small show presents architectural sculpture by two African artists: Aboudramane, from the Ivory Coast, who lives in Paris, and Bodys Isek Kingelez, from Zaire, who lives in Kinshasa. Aboudramane's works, with titles like "The Reliquary House" and "House of the King's Wife," are made of straw, clay, and horn, and are apparently linked to a fantastical past. Kingelez's, by contrast, are very modern: futuristic high-rises, they borrow from African, Asian, and European architecture, and are meticulously made of painted cardboard. . . . ¶ "Secrecy: African Art That Conceals and Reveals." Through Aug. 22. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Flora Photographica: The Flower in Photography from 1835 to the Present." Much more than a collection of pretty blossoms, this exhibition of a hundred and eighty images ranges from Scowen & Company albumen prints from the eighteen-seventies to a great 1953 shot, by Jean Dieuzaide, of Salvador Dali emerging from the water, a pair of petals balanced on the points of his waxed mustache. Through Aug. 21. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—The library devotes its entire space to "Jazz," featuring more than four hundred original scores and arrangements, rare manuscripts, film footage, photographs from the forties to the sixties, and radio broadcasts from the thirties. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Roxie Munro—Twenty-five detailed watercolors of New York, Paris, and London, some of which have appeared as covers for this magazine. Through July 31. (Images, 580 Broadway. Open Saturdays.)

César Paternosto—Twenty recent abstract paintings and seven new pigmented-concrete sculptures, inspired by the sacred architecture of the Incas. Through July 24. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

Elyn Zimmerman—Monolithic sculptural works that suggest either natural rock formations or futuristic geometric portals. Through Sept. 11. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

"The Museum in the Gallery"—This show of selections from New York University's art collection features twentieth-century American and European art. There are several outstanding works, mostly from the late fifties and early sixties, including a large Kenneth Noland target, a small Rauschenberg collage, a Frankenthaler stain landscape, a classic 1963 Jim Dine, and an effervescent Norman Bluhm painting titled "Bitter Lemon." The showstopper is a portrait by Sonia von Hausenberg of Woody Allen in a tutu. Through July 23. (Grey Art Gallery, 33 Washington Pl.)

Short List—siah armajani: Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through July 31. . . . **berrisford boothe:** Kelly, 591 Broadway. Through July 31. . . . **charles e. burchfield:** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Through July 30. . . . **kerri scharlin:** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Through July 24. . . . **regina silveira:** Ledisflam, 130 Prince St. Through July 30. . . . **barbara valenta:** O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through July 17.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

"Memories, Facts, and Lies"—This show challenges the notion that seeing is knowing. Barbara Ess's melancholy sepia-toned photograph of a ram's head is actually of a trophy hanging in Teddy Roosevelt's birthplace. The soldiers of David Levinthal's black-and-white photo series "Hitler Moves East" turn out to be part of his vast toy-soldier collection. Komar and Melamid's artifacts of the life and work of a fictional Russian artist—a sentimental portrait, a clothes hanger, a stone palette, and a worn leather eye patch—are accompanied by sixty miniature landscapes whose banality is probably intentional. Also notable are Doug Ischar's elaborate video-and-film installation, which includes an old polo shirt with the projected image of a man swimming where the logo should be; a Cindy Sherman photograph of the silhouette of a woman dressing; and David Humphrey's painting of a bride and two-headed groom. Through July 31. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Charles Krafft—This Seattle-based artist paints disaster scenes—train wrecks, the bombing of Dresden—on blue-and-white delftware purchased at flea markets and garage sales. Through July 30. (Clark, 24 W. 57th St.)

Short List—john adams/paul weingarten: Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through July 30. . . . **walter hatke/keith jacobshagen:** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through July 30.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Place Makers

Human inventiveness is the primary theme of two exhibitions at Lowinsky (575 Broadway) that open July 15 and run through September 4. Margaret Morton's black-and-white photographs of environments that were created by homeless people in New York are all about making something from nothing. Morton's respect for the ingenuity of the men and women who built these shelters is clear. The photographs capture their architectural resourcefulness, and Morton's work neither romanticizes nor sentimentalizes; it simply honors what she found: the need to have a place of one's own. As we see in her pictures, rubble and discarded wood can be as powerful as marble.

Skeet McAuley's photographs show another aspect of the man-made: the luxurious side. His huge color photographs of golf courses that have supplanted an otherwise arid landscape—in the Southwest—are as lush as can be, and also comic, in that a sense of unnatural nature somehow comes through. Who knew that pictures of golf courses could become a genre? A few years ago, John Yang recorded a variety of golf-course landscapes in his black-and-white studies of golf-course design, and now we have McAuley's shots, which demonstrate that, with the help of technology, the grass can be greener not only on the other side but wherever you want it to be.

Ansel Adams—In addition to his classic vistas, this exhibit also includes work that serves as a reminder of Adams' ability to take great portraits and casual shots, and even pull off modernist abstraction. Through July 29. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Outside the Dream: Child Poverty in America." Seventy black-and-white works by photojournalist Stephen Shames. . . . ¶ Collaborative Polaroids by artists and teen-agers from New York City shelters, drug treatment programs, and housing projects. The artists include Chuck Close, Andres Serrano, and William Wegman. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave., at 43rd St.—"Commodity Image." Eighty works exploring contemporary photography's role in commerce and acquisitiveness. Through July 18. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—a. roy greer: O. K. Harris, [illegible] West Broadway. Through July 17. . . . **neelon crawford:** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through Aug. 27. . . . **daido moriyama:** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through Aug. 13. . . . **tomio seike:** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through July 30. . . . **minayoshi takada:** Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through Sept. 10. . . . **sabine weiss/bruce cratsley:** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through July 30.

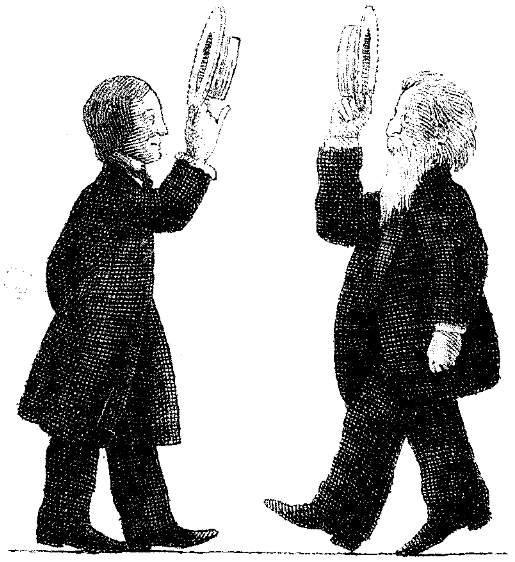
(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Natural History, the Jewish Museum, the New York Public Library, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.)

MUSIC

Permutations

OPERA composers sometimes find themselves entangled with a work that resists being pinned down in a final form. It took two major overhauls before Beethoven conquered "Fidelio." Bernstein chased "Candide" for three decades, and "Merrily We Roll Along" may keep Sondheim occupied for years to come. Verdi's bugbear was "Stiffelio." Its plot, involving a cuckolded German pastor, mystified the Italian audience of 1850, to whom the idea of a wedded clergyman—let alone one who proposes divorcing his errant wife—was strange indeed. The outraged civil censors transposed the action from the nineteenth century to the fifteenth, and transformed the central character from a parson into a prime minister—accordingly retitling the opera "Guglielmo Wellingrode"—before they would tolerate further productions. Resisting their revisions, Verdi withdrew the piece and (apparently) destroyed the original orchestral score. But the music was too good to waste, and seven years later he put much of it to use in his "Aroldo," an unrelated tale of medieval Britain.

"Stiffelio" languished in obscurity until 1967, when two copyists' scores from early productions surfaced in the basement of the Naples Conservatory. Circumventing jealous efforts to guard the discovery, Vincent La Selva obtained a photocopy and, in 1976, conducted his New York Grand Opera Company in the work's American première. Now in its twentieth year, the company will reprise "Stiffelio" in Central Park on July 14. Two weeks later, on July 27, they'll stage "Aroldo," so that operatic diehards can see how Verdi's problem child developed.



CHAS B. SLACKMAN

Schumann and Brahms meet at the New York Philharmonic.

IN TOWN—OPERA

New York Grand Opera—Vincent La Selva leads a staged production of Verdi's "Stiffelio," with tenor Edward Perretti in the title role and soprano Ingrid Zeldin as his unfaithful wife. (Rumsey Playfield, Central Park, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 14 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

IN TOWN—ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—In the opening concerts of a three-week Schumann-and-Brahms festival, Kurt Masur conducts Schumann's "Genoveva" Overture and Piano Concerto (featuring Richard Goode), as well as Brahms' Symphony No. 1. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. July 14-15 at 8. . . . **NOTE:** Peter Ostwald will present pre-concert lectures, which begin at 6:45 and are open to ticketholders.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—July 14: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" Overture, Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Dmitry Sitkovetsky), and C-Minor Piano Concerto (with Alexis Weissenberg), as well as Strauss's Divertimento for Small Orchestra. . . . **NOTE:** Both evenings beginning at 7, Andrew Appel will play a pre-concert recital (open to ticketholders) exploring the relationship between Couperin's harpsichord music and Strauss's Divertimento. . . . ¶ July 16-17: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's Piano Concerto in B-Flat Major (K. 456, featuring Christian Zacharias), as well as Strauss's Wind Serenade (Op. 7) and incidental music to "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (with narrator Werner Klemperer, the New York City Gay Men's Chorus, and various soloists). . . . ¶ July 19: The Tokyo String Quartet plays Mozart's Quartet in E-Flat (K. 428) and Brahms' C-Minor Quartet; André Previn joins them for Schumann's Piano Quintet. . . . ¶ July 20-21: Hans Graf conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's Symphony No. 32 and Violin Concerto No. 5 (with Itzhak Perlman), as well as in Brahms' Serenade No. 1. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

Goldman Memorial Band—Gene Young conducts music by composers whose surnames begin with "W"—a wanton whimsy which will warrant wallowing in weighty Wagner, witty Weill, and winsome Waldteufel. (Seaside Park, Brooklyn. July 17 at 8. . . . ¶ Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 18 at 7. No tickets necessary for either concert.)

IN TOWN—RECITALS

New Century Saxophone Quartet—Performing quartets by Jean Françaix and Caryl Florio, in addition to works by Shostakovich, Bernstein, and others. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 14 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Claudia Dumschat—Organist, performing an all-Bach recital, including the "Wedge" Prelude and Fugue, the C-Minor Passacaglia, and the C-Major Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. July 14 at 8. Admission by contribution. Organ by von Beckerath.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Joseph Villa performs two "Klavierstücke" by Schubert; Rolfe Schulte joins him for Janáček's Sonata for Violin and Piano; and cellist Rafael Figueroa completes the ensemble for Smetana's G-Minor Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 15 at 6:30 and July 18 at 4, with the Thursday performance preceded by a candlelit dinner.)

Summergarden—The Museum of Modern Art's survey of twentieth-century Latin-American music continues with a concert by the Halcyon String Quartet, which will play works by Roberto Sierra (of Puerto Rico), Celso Garrido-Lecca (of Peru), Manuel Enríquez (of Mexico), and Villa-Lobos (of Brazil). (Sculpture Garden, 14 W. 54th St. July 16-17 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

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Lollapalooza '93 at Stanhope, New Jersey.

GARY PANTER

Joseph Clair Davis—Carillonneur, performing a D-Minor Suite by Handel. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. July 20 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Washington Square Music Festival Chamber Ensemble—Performing Mozart's Clarinet Quintet and Schubert's String Quintet. (Washington Square Park. July 20 at 8. No tickets necessary. In case of rain, the concert will be held at Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St.)

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor Music Festival—July 15 at 4:15: The Slovenian pianist Dubravka Tomsic performs Beethoven's Sonata in E-Flat (Op. 31, No. 3), Debussy's "Estampes," Chopin's four scherzos, and "Five Macedonian Dances" by the pianist's compatriot Alojz Srebotnjak. . . . ¶ July 16 at 8:30: The Orchestra of St. Luke's (conductorless for the evening) performs Haydn's Symphony No. 2 and concertos by C. P. E. Bach (featuring harpsichordist Robert Wolinsky), François Devienne (with flutist Elizabeth Mann), and Mozart (his Violin Concerto No. 1, with Krista Bennion Feeney). . . . ¶ July 17 at 8:30: André Previn leads the Orchestra of St. Luke's in Rossini's "L'Italiana in Algeri" Overture, Haydn's Symphony No. 104, and Mendelssohn's incidental music for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (featuring narrator Claire Bloom, sopranos Juliana Gondek and Lorraine Hunt, and the women of the Concert Chorale of New York). . . . ¶ July 18 at 5:30: The Tokyo String Quartet performs quartets by Haydn (in G Major, Op. 76, No. 1) and Ravel, plus, with the help of André Previn, Schumann's Piano Quintet. (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Glimmerglass Opera—Rossini's "Le Comte Ory." (July 15 at 8 and July 19 at 2.) . . . ¶ "Così fan Tutte." (July 16 at 8 and July 18 at 2.) . . . ¶ "The Midnight Angel," by David Carlson. (July 17 at 8.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255. English supertitles at all performances.)

Tanglewood—July 15 at 8:30: The Beaux Arts Trio performs Mozart's Piano Trio in B-Flat Major (K. 502), George Rochberg's "Summer, 1990," and Tchaikovsky's A-Minor Piano Trio. . . . ¶ July 16 at 6:30: Cellist Joel Krosnick and pianist Gilbert Kalish perform sonatas by Rachmaninoff (in G Minor) and Shostakovich (in D Minor). . . . ¶ July 16 at 8:30: Yuri Temirkanov conducts the Boston Symphony in Borodin's "Prince Igor" Overture and Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" (featuring pianist John Browning) and Symphony No. 2. . . . ¶ July 17 at 8:30: Robert Spano conducts the Boston Symphony in Stravinsky's Divertimento from "The Fairy's Kiss" and Concerto for Piano and Winds (featuring Peter Serkin), as well as Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. . . . ¶ July 18 at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Dvořák's "Carnival Overture" and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (with Itzhak Perlman) and Symphony No. 1. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Opera Festival of New Jersey—Final performances of the season. July 16 at 8: "Carmen," sung in English. . . . ¶ July 17 at 8: "The Magic Flute," in English. (Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N.J. For information about tickets, call 1-609 936-1500.)

Aston Magna Festival—A period-instrument exploration of early-nineteenth-century Vienna, touching on Schubert, Johann Kaspar Mertz, and Beethoven (his "Variations on Mozart's 'Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen,' " as arranged by Ferdinando Carulli for guitar and piano); with pianist David Breitman, guitarist Richard Savino, and singers Judith Malafronte (mezzo-soprano) and Frederick Urrey (tenor). (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. July 16 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-7425. . . . ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 17 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3595.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 16 at 8:30: The Tokyo String Quartet plays quartets by Mozart (in E-Flat Major, K. 428), Debussy, and Brahms (in C Minor). . . . ¶ July 17 at 8:30: Brass and string music from—or inspired by—Venice, by Vivaldi, Rossini, Martin Bresnick, and others. . . . ¶ July 18 at 3: Music by Bach, Mendelssohn, Ives, Frank Zappa, and Scott Lindroth, in a program geared to young listeners. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. For information about tickets, call 1-203 542-3000.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Lollapalooza '93—Much has been written about the commercial regularization of this travelling extravaganza, which began as a largely improvised caravan of loud, scraggly, and otherwise "alternative" bands and sideshow attractions in 1991. There is now a first-aid tent to cope with "moshing-related injuries." Record companies desperately pitch their up-and-coming acts to the independent-minded promoters. The general categories of the music might be defined as maelstrom (Primus, Rage Against the Machine, Tool), thunder rock (Alice in Chains, Fishbone), twisted lyrical (Dinosaur Jr.), and African-American rural hip-hop (Arrested Development). Bring sunblock and leave your Duran Duran T-shirt at home. (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. 1-201 347-4700. July 16 at 2.)

Van Halen—It's a cruel world indeed when this band's former lead singer, David Lee Roth, gets arrested in Washington Square Park while the current front man, Sammy Hagar, remains free to offend the masses—but, hey, that's rock and roll. In all fairness, Roth was obnoxious, too, but his wacky persona and neo-Vegas shtick always seemed to subvert the genre's predictable misogyny and sophomoric clichés. Roth's character and the unmatched virtuosity of Eddie's guitar work made the original Van Halen unique. The band just hasn't been the same since Roth's departure/dismissal, in 1985. Sammy Hagar does a workmanlike job, and the product certainly still moves, but he'll never shine Roth's patootie. On "Live: Right Here, Right Now," Van Halen's first concert recording, the band sounds generic, unsubversive, and a little bored. Maybe you just have to be there. Vince Neil, late of Mötley Crüe, opens. (Jones Beach Theatre. For more information, call 1-516 221-1000. July 14 at 8.)

Tina Turner—You've seen the movie, read the book, heard the albums—now it's time to check out the real thing: the muscular, energetic performer, with her Jagger edge (she taught Mick the pony) and a voice that shimmies out yowls longer than her legs. Go ahead. Follow the seductive buildups that explode into fierce, driving rock. Listen for the daunting stamp of ownership she puts on the songs she sings, whether they were written for her or someone else (her "Help!" has a pathos and depth that make it unrecognizable as the Beatles' mock plea). She'll be one step ahead the whole way, enjoying her purview. Chris Isaak, who's also perfect, opens. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 14 and July 16-17 at 8. . . . ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. July 20 at 8.)

L.L. Cool J./Naughty by Nature—With Heavy D, Silk, Shai, SWV, H-Town, and Jade. Tall, dark, and handsome L.L. Cool J. is a rarity: a non-melodic rapper whose commanding voice somehow puts one in mind of a great singer. The twenty-five-year-old is touring to support his excellent fifth album—the underrated "14 Shots to the Dome"—and continuing to prove he belongs in the pop pantheon. Naughty by Nature has become a huge hip-hop act by fusing hook-laden hardcore with front man Treach's ragamuffin phrasing. SWV (for Sisters with Voices) and Jade are girl-group practitioners of New Jill Swing. H-Town, Shai, and Silk—a trio, a quartet, and a quintet—all combine lovely doo-wop harmonies with rap arrangements. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 16 at 7.)

Gospel Concert—The Holmes Brothers' R. & B. approach to gospel brings earthiness to even the most spiritual numbers. In their rendition, "Amazing Grace" hits you, as younger brother Wendell Holmes says, "where you live." With the Fairfield Four and the Institutional Radio Choir. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 17 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Johnny Clegg & Savuka—Town Hall, 123 [illegible] 43rd St. 840-2824. July 14 at 8.

Tito Nieves—With La India, in a salsa concert. (Central Park SummerStage. July 18 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Patti LaBelle—Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. July 19-21 at 7:30.

Whitney Houston—With Angie & Debbie (two more members of the gospel-singing Winans family) and Kirk Whalum. (Radio City Music Hall. July 20 at 8. Through July 26.)

"Jazz in July"—The first concert in the 92nd Street Y's annual summer series is "The Other Jelly Roll Morton," with the Jim Cullum jazz band, Terry Burrell, and Dick Hyman & John Sheridan. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. July 20 at 8. The series runs through July 29.)

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SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Oakland A's, July 15-16 at 7:30, July 17 at 1, and July 18 at 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Seattle Mariners, July 19-20 at 7:30.

Mets—Away until July 27, when they'll face the Florida Marlins.

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000, and the Mets stumble at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Surf & Turf—For a coffee substitute, try one of these early-morning walks. July 15 at 6 A.M.: The South Street Seaport Museum is offering a behind-the-scenes tour of the Fulton Fish Market. For more information, call 669-9416. . . . ¶ July 16 at 7:45 A.M.: The New York Hall of Science will lead a tour of Belmont Racetrack, including the stables and a demonstration of how the starting gate works. For more information, call 1-718 699-0005.

A Cappella Alfresco—This week's events in the Midsummer Night Swing series include a salsa band and an a-cappella group performing songs from the nineteen-fifties. (Fountain Plaza, Lincoln Center. Wednesdays through Saturdays, from 8:15 to 11. Dance instruction begins at 6:30 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Through July 24. For information about tickets, call 875-5400.)

Shall I Compare Thee to a SummerStage—The reading series at Central Park continues with Maira Kalman, who writes offbeat picture books for postmodern children and precocious adults, and Jon Scieszka, who fractures fairy tales, on July 15 at 8:30. At the same time the following evening, there will be a reading with David Cale and the Nuyorican Poets, with host Bob Holman, the David Letterman of the Lower East Side poetry scene. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.)

Shakespeare in the Garden—On July 18 at 1, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden will offer visitors a free tour of the Shakespeare Garden and the herb gardens. At 2:30, there will be a Renaissance Street Singers concert. For more information, call 1-718 941-4044, ext. 215.

Readings—July 14 at 7: Amy Bloom and Christina Baker Kline will read from their new novels. (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 15 at 8: Bev Jafek and Melissa Scott will read from their own science fiction. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the reading.) . . . ¶ July 16 at 8: Novelist Matthew Stadler and others will read as part of the Seattle Rendezvous Reading Series. (Fez at Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ July 20 at 6:30: An evening of poetry and music spanning two hundred and fifty years of New York history. (Abigail Adams Smith Museum, 421 E. 61st St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the reading.) . . . ¶ July 20 at 7: Jim Lewis will read from his new novel, "Sister," and Frederic Tuten will read from his novel, "Tintin in the New World." (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—July 15 at 6:30: Laurie Beckelman, chairwoman of the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, will talk about a proposal to create new cultural landmarks. (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st. St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.) . . . ¶ July 15 at 8 and July 17 at 2: Artist Roxie Munro will talk about her depictions of New York. (Images Art Gallery, 580 Broadway. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 20 at 6:30: Ana Mae Barbosa, Jean Franco, and Amalia Mesa-Baines will discuss women's movements in the arts, with Julia P. Herzberg acting as moderator. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9480.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			14	15	16	17
18	19	20				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Beware of a Holy Whore" (1970, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German).
Theatre 2: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (†).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Theatre 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "Orlando" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through July 15: "Heimat II: Chronicle of a Generation: Episodes 8 and 9" (Edgar Reitz, in German).
From July 16: "Heimat II: Chronicle of a Generation: Episodes 10 and 11."

Newman Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
A program of Italian films.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).
Theatre 3: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 3: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 4: "Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 7: "The Firm" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Hard-Boiled" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (Claude Sautet, in French).
Theatre 2: Through July 15: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash). From July 16: "Benefit of the Doubt" (Jonathan Heap).
Theatre 3: Through July 15: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (Sidney Lumet). From July 16: "Hocus Pocus" (Kenny Ortega), with Bette Midler.
Theatre 4: "Chain of Desire" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).
Theatre 6: "American Heart" (Martin Bell).
Theatre 7: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 3: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 4: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle), with Walter Matthau and Mason Gamble.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 2: "Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes).
Theatre 3: Through July 15: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash). From July 16: "Hocus Pocus" (Kenny Ortega), with Bette Midler.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (Sidney Lumet).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Jurassic Park" (†).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 2: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"House of Cards" (Michael Lessac), with Kathleen Turner and Tommy Lee Jones.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman), with Kevin Kline.
Theatre 2: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle), with Walter Matthau.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through July 15: "Made in America" (Richard Benjamin), with Whoopi Goldberg and Ted Danson.
From July 16: "Benefit of the Doubt" (Jonathan Heap).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Last Action Hero" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through July 15: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†). From July 16: "Hocus Pocus" (Kenny Ortega), with Bette Midler.
Theatre 2: "Indecent Proposal" (Adrian Lyne).
Theatre 3: "Guilty as Sin" (Sidney Lumet).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
Through July 15: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).
From July 16: To be announced.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 4: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 5: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 6: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin), with Sylvester Stallone.
Theatre 2: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Sleepless in Seattle" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Firm" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Firm" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-18[illegible]
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 4: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 5: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).
Theatre 6: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).
Theatre 7: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle), with Walter Matthau and Mason Gamble.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through July 15: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes). From July 16: "Hocus Pocus" (Kenny Ortega), with Bette Midler.
Theatre 2: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Barjo" (directed by Jerome Boivin; in French).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Romper Stomper" (Geoffrey Wright).

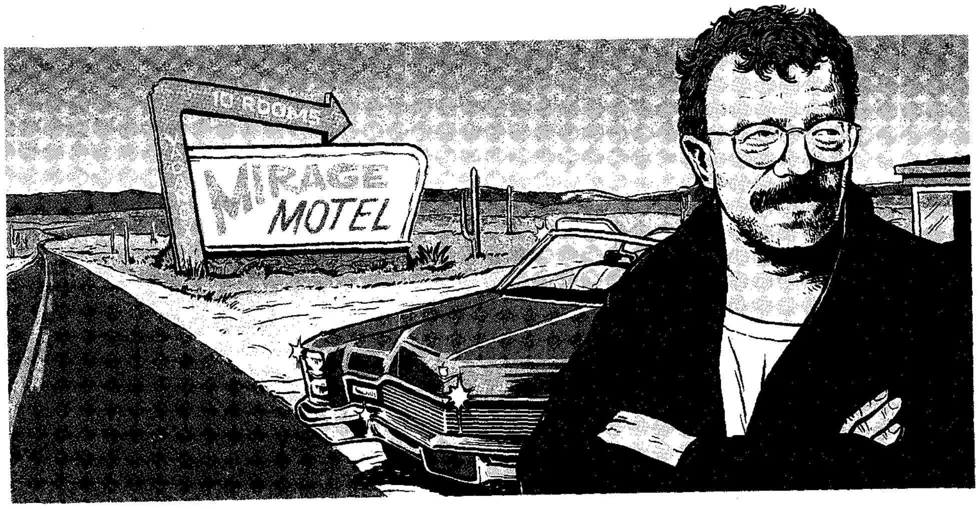
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography" (Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, and Stuart Samuels), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman).
Theatre 3: "For a Lost Soldier" (Roeland Kerbosch, in Dutch).
Theatre 4: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 2: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).
Theatre 4: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 6: Through July 15: "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin), with Sylvester Stallone. From July 16: "Hocus Pocu[illegible] (Kenny Ortega), with Bette Midler.
Theatre 7: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Theatre 8: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 9: "In the Line of Fire" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Made in America" (Richard Benjamin), with Whoopi Goldberg and Ted Danson.



Andrei Codrescu in "Road Scholar."

MARK ZINGARELLI

Theatre 2: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).
Theatre 3: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman).
Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz).
Theatre 2: "Indecent Proposal" (Adrian Lyne).
Theatre 3: "Sliver" (Phillip Noyce).
Theatre 4: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 5: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 6: "Map of the Human Heart" (Vincent Ward).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Jurassic Park" (†).
Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Indecent Proposal" (Adrian Lyne).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Chain of Desire" (†).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: Through July 15: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan). From July 16: "Road Scholar" (Roger Weisberg), with Andrei Codrescu.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"The Story of Qiu Ju" (Zhang Yimou).
Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Music of Chance" (Philip Haas).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dave" (Ivan Reitman), with Kevin Kline.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"In the Line of Fire" (†).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 2: "Orlando" (†).
Theatre 3: "Orlando" (†).
Theatre 4: "Jacquot" (†).
Theatre 5: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 6: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (Claude Sautet, in French).
Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Jurassic Park" (†).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).
Theatre 3: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 4: "What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Firm" (†).
Theatre 6: Through July 15: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle). From July 16: "Hocus Pocus" (Kenny Ortega), with Bette Midler.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).
Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (†).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Son-in-Law" (Steve Rash).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†); and (evenings only) "Guilty as Sin" (Sidney Lumet).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Made in America" (directed by Richard Benjamin).
Theatre 2: Through July 15: "Hot Shots! Part Deux" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen. From July 16: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 3: "Cliffhanger" (Renny Harlin).
Theatre 4: "Sleepless in Seattle" (†).
Theatre 5: "Posse" (Mario Van Peebles).
Theatre 6: "Dennis the Menace" (Nick Castle).
Theatre 7: "Weekend at Bernie's 2" (Robert Klane).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"What's Love Got to Do with It" (†).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "In the Line of Fire" (†).
Theatre 2: "Menace II Society" (Allen and Albert Hughes).
Theatre 3: "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (†).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Firm" (†).
National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Last Action Hero" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rookie of the Year" (Daniel Stern).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
July 14-15: "The Ghost Ship" (1944, directed by Mark Robson); "The Seventh Victim" (1943, Robson); and "Bedlam" (1946, Robson).
From July 16: A week-long program of films by Edward Wood, Jr.
Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through July 17: "Sunset Boulevard" (1950, Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson.
From July 18: "Doctor Zhivago" (1965, David Lean), with Omar Sharif.
Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 14: "The Appaloosa" (1966, Sidney J. Furie), with Marlon Brando; and "The Chase" (1966, Arthur Penn), with Brando.
July 15: "1941" (†); and "The Blues Brothers" (1980, John Landis), with John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd.
July 16-17: "A Clockwork Orange" (1971, Stanley Kubrick), with Malcolm McDowell; and "Blue Velvet" (1986, David Lynch).
July 18: "The Trial" (1962, Orson Welles), with Anthony Perkins; and "The Third Man" (1950, Carol Reed), with Welles and Joseph Cotten.
July 19: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German); and "The Blue Angel" (1929, Josef von Sternberg; in German), with Marlene Dietrich.
July 20: "Charade" (1963, Stanley Donen), with Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn; and "Arabesque" (1966, Donen), with Gregory Peck and Sophia Loren.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—July 15-16 at 2:30, 3, and 6, July 17-18 at 2, 2:30, and 5, and July 19-20 and July 22 at 2:30, 3, and 6: A program of films from Mexico and other Latin-American countries.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—July 14 at 2, 6:15, and 10:15: "Pépé le Moko" (see page 22). . . . ¶ July 14 at 3:45 and 8:15: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French). . . . ¶ July 15 at 2, 6, and 9:45: "The Widow Couderc" (1974, Pierre Granier-Deferre; in French). . . . ¶ July 15 at 4 and 8: "Le Corbeau" (†). . . . ¶ July 16 at 2, 6, and 10, and July 17 at 6 and 10: "Casque d'Or" (1952, Jacques Becker; in French). . . . ¶ July 16-17 at 4 and 8: "La Balance" (1983, Bob Swaim; in French). . . . ¶ July 17-18 at 2: "Donkey Skin" (1975, Jacques Demy; in French). . . . ¶ July 18 at 4 and 8: "Le Jour Se Lève" ("Daybreak"; 1939, Marcel Carné; in French). . . . ¶ July 18 at 6 and 10: "Judex" (1963, Georges Franju; in French). . . . ¶ July 20 at 2 and 6:15: "La Bête Humaine" (1938, Jean Renoir; in French). . . . ¶ July 20 at 4 and 8:15: "Police" (1986, Maurice Pialat; in French).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"All in the Family: The Classic Melodramas of John Stahl and Douglas Sirk." July 17 at 2: "The Tarnished Angels" (1958, Sirk), with Rock Hudson. . . . ¶ July 17 at 4: "A Lady Surrenders" (1930, Stahl). . . . ¶ July 18 at 2: "Magnificent Obsession" (†). . . . ¶ July 18 at 4: "Magnificent Obsession" (1954, Sirk), with Jane Wyman and Hudson.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 14 at 12:30 and 6: "Eléna et les Hommes" (1956, Jean Renoir; in French), with Ingrid Bergman. . . . ¶ July 14 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Caroline Chérie" (1950, Richard Pottier; in French), with Martine Carol.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 16-17 at 3: "The Shaggy Dog" (1959, Charles Barton), with Fred MacMurray. . . . ¶ July 16 at 7: "The Godfather Part II" (1974, Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro. . . . ¶ July 17 at 7: "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1958, Richard Brooks), with Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, and Burl Ives.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)— July 14 at 8: "The Ten Commandments" (1923, Cecil B. De Mille; silent), with Theodore Roberts. (Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.)

Nineteenth Century
Decorative Arts

For the
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MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Unveiling the Labyrinth

IN Julien Duvivier's intoxicating 1937 melodrama, "Pépé le Moko" (playing July 14, at the Walter Reade Theatre), the Casbah in Algiers is like a crooks' outpost of the French Foreign Legion—all who enter close the door irrevocably on their past. Although Hollywood's 1938 version, "Algiers," which starred Charles Boyer and Hedy Lamarr, overshadowed it in America, Duvivier's tale of an expatriate master thief named Pépé, who yearns for his beloved Paris, established an enduring romantic movie myth. Pépé is a confident, charismatic gang leader who stays true to his own codes of honor and professionalism. (He shoots gendarmes only in the legs.) What makes him vulnerable in the end is his amorous, nostalgic longing. Half crisp authority and half dreamy sensuality, this classic antihero brings out the galvanic quality of Duvivier's great star: the stoic, rugged Jean Gabin.

There's something contemporary and hard-edged about the movie's view of the Casbah as a multicultural inner city outside the reach of mainstream authorities. Duvivier does more than elicit indelible performances from Lucas Gridoux as a shrewd, dogged inspector, Line Noro as Pépé's lady of the Casbah, and Mireille Balin as the diamond-adorned tourist who makes Pépé ache for the City of Lights. He integrates them into a bristling environment. The director parts the curtains on a criminal hotbed while Gabin tears a little piece of your heart.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

CHAIN OF DESIRE—Not quite as kinky as it sounds, but you can't have everything. Temistocles Lopez's movie is a New York update of the Max Ophuls classic "La Ronde," itself adapted from an Arthur Schnitzler play. The carrousel structure remains, tinged with the risks of a more treacherous age: A meets B, B meets C, and so on. Some are married, some are gay, some never exchange a word; Lopez rings the changes with levity and charm, and if each encounter leaves you wanting to know more, that only sharpens the melancholy of the film, the knowledge that satisfaction hangs just out of reach. The very act of repetition brings with it a clutch of sad gags—"Why can't I just get laid like everyone else?" asks a disgruntled Grace Zabriskie, as the wife of Malcolm McDowell. The performances are a mixed bunch, as you might expect, and the dialogue occasionally drops into laziness; one had hoped to have heard the last of "It's tough out there on the streets." Lopez's movie doesn't even like the streets; it's happier inside—in a bedroom, a studio, or a church. There are moments of exquisite, sombre half-lighting, just right for the uncertain needs of its characters; and one linkup, of voyeurs at their windows, is both the loneliest and funniest sex scene of the year. A slight and rather ramshackle movie, it's never as arousing as it hopes to be, but then Lopez is that uncommon creature, a director who is most at home with the fleeting and the failed.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

LE CORBEAU (1943)—Henri-Georges Clouzot's gall-and-wormwood thriller about a town terrorized by a series of vicious poison-pen letters that drive various townspeople to crime and suicide. The plot—tracking down the blackmailer—is rather mechanical, but Clouzot can give an audience the cold creeps. At the time, the depravity and political corruption revealed in this slice of provincial life were nastily shocking; there's not a likable person in the entire film, and, since it was released during the Occupation, it was thought to serve the interests of the Nazis. When France was liberated, both Clouzot and the picture's star, Pierre Fresnay, were accused of unpatriotic activity. In French.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; July 15.)

THE FIRM—A vacuous upper-middle-class success story about a fresh-faced lad outwitting both sides of the law while securing wealth and safety for his family. That Cub Scout of superstars Tom Cruise is perfectly cast as the go-getting, white-bread hero of John Grisham's tale of chicanery and murder in a hoity-toity Memphis law firm. The director, Sydney Pollack, and his usual phalanx of screenwriters (the credited ones are Robert Towne, David Rayfiel, and David Rabe) try to improve on their source—and only partially succeed. The clunky plot continues to be riddled with implausibilities, and the movie runs a slack two hours and thirty-four minutes. But Pollack and his team do come up with a more logical line of action and give the hero and his wife (Jeanne Tripplehorn) a smidgen of self-awareness. (The sexy, skeptical Tripplehorn handles the challenge far better than Cruise does.) And they soup up the side characters. Holly Hunter, Gary Busey, Ed Harris, David Strathairn, and Wilford Brimley do themselves proud, and Gene Hackman is in a class by himself, brewing unprecedented mixtures of moral dry rot, fellow feeling, and animal vitality. The supporting cast provides centripetal force; too bad the center cannot hold.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

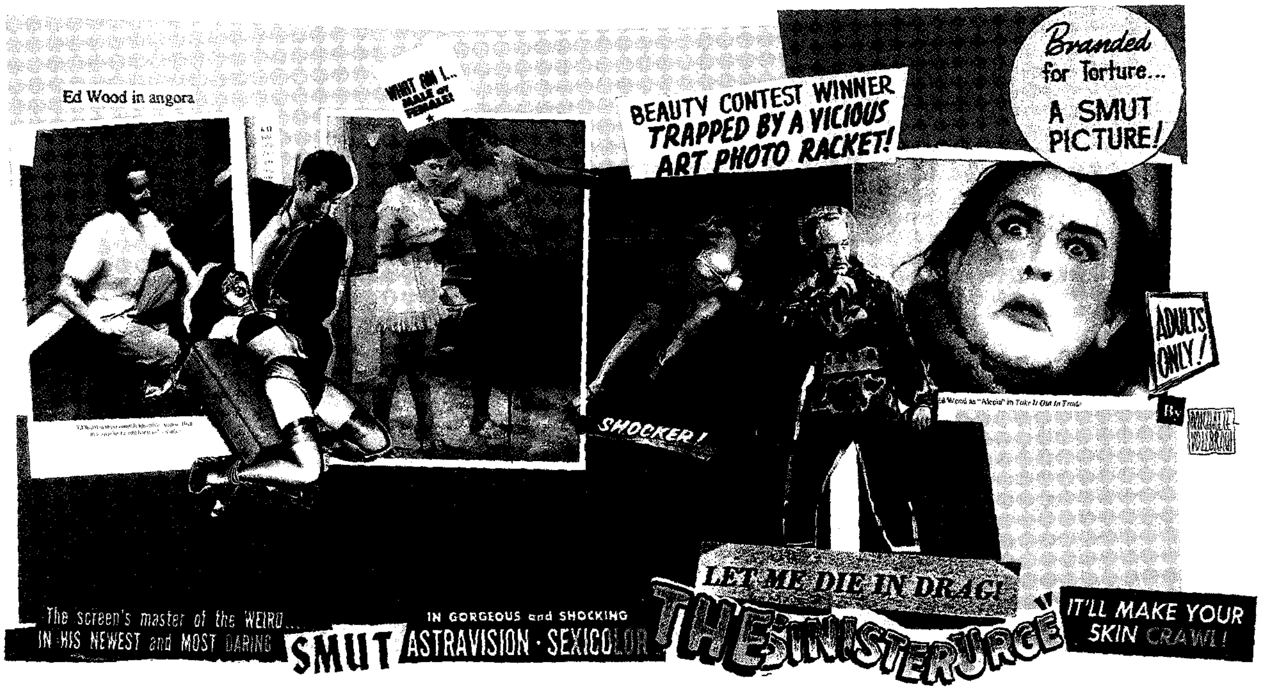
HARD-BOILED—Hong Kong action specialist John Woo does a vivid cartoon version of the kinetics and the twisted-loyalty themes of Sam Peckinpah in this tale of duelling triads and lawmen. It gives the phrase "friendly fire" a new urban meaning: undercover police as well as innocent bystanders are caught in the crossfire when supercop Chow Yun-fat gets to the bottom of an enormous criminal arsenal. Images of a tearoom and a hospital shot up and transformed into charnel houses may reflect the chaos of Hong Kong, but Woo is no message-movie-maker—he works everything out strictly in terms of violent spectacle. His operatic excesses push it all into pitch-black comedy. Bodies don't just fall in this movie: they go into extravagant flailings that alternately resemble a tumbling act, a Twyla Tharp dance, and Sammy Davis, Jr.,'s pistol-tap routine. In Cantonese. —M.S. (Cinema Village.)

IN THE LINE OF FIRE—Clint Eastwood plays Frank Horrigan, a tired-looking middle-aged Secret Service agent who gets wind of a plot to kill the President and marshals his flagging powers in an attempt to stop the assassin (John Malkovich). It's a basic race against the clock: the good guy knows what the bad guy means to do; the villain's preparations and the hero's investigation run on separate tracks until they converge, like runaway trains, at the scene of the intended crime. The movie has a clear, simple thriller logic that's far more satisfying than the static variations-on-a-massacre construction of Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" pictures and spaghetti Westerns. And the heroics here are stirring, because the star's ravaged face and stiff, weary gestures tell us that everything Horrigan does costs him something, physically and emotionally. The director, Wolfgang Petersen, isn't a particularly imaginative or stylish filmmaker, but he delivers the goods and in record time. Both Eastwood's performance and the movie itself have the quality of meat-and-potatoes genre-picture entertainment: nothing fancy, nothing unusual. The only hints of more exotic and unpredictable sensations come from Malkovich, who is threatening to become the most gloriously peculiar screen presence since the heyday of Alastair Sim.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/12/93.) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy.)

JACQUOT—Agnès Varda's film is a graceful, affecting tribute to her husband, the filmmaker Jacques Demy, who died (of leukemia, at age fifty-nine) in 1990. Documentary footage shows Demy in the last year of his life, reminiscing about his childhood and adolescence in the coastal town of Nantes. His liver-spotted hands caress the cheap cameras with which he shot his first movies—most of them crude but imaginative animated shorts with paper-cutout characters. Varda fleshes out her husband's memories with dramatized episodes from his early life, and uses clips from his mature films—"Lola" (1961) and "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964) are the best known—to demonstrate the relationship between the mundane experiences of his youth and the ravishing romantic art he created as an adult. The film's elegiac, reflective rhythm is seductive and very moving. Varda conveys the joy of young Jacques's learning, with primitive means, to tell stories on film, and gives us evidence, too, of how fully the movies we know him by expressed his dreamy, passionate nature. This picture celebrates its subject by treating Demy's biography as an instance of a rare continuity between life and movie art—as a miraculous, ephemeral convergence, like "Lola." In French.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

JURASSIC PARK—Steven Spielberg's warm-blooded, state-of-the-art dinosaurs are a lot speedier than their nearest movie kin, the galumphing atomic-mutant monsters that crunched Japanese cities under their feet in the fifties and early sixties, and that enables the filmmaker to create dynamic stalk-and-chase sequences. But neither the carnivorous dinos nor the placid herbivores inspire anything close to awe, even with the aid of audience stimulants like surging symphonic music (by the shameless John Williams) and repeated closeups of wide-eyed, openmouthed actors. The screenplay, which is credited to Michael Crichton and David Koepp, reduces Crichton's intricately constructed novel to its bare bones: people running away from hungry animals. For all the ingenuity of the movie's engineering, "Jurassic Park" doesn't have the imagination—or the courage—to take us any place we haven't been a thousand times before. It's just a creature feature on amphetamines.—T.R. (6/28/93) (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Regency, and Metro Cinema.)

LAST ACTION HERO—Here's a new idea: a thriller where the thrills lead nowhere. A boy named Danny (Austin O'Brien), bored at school and frightened at home, is enthralled by the screen exploits of Jack Slater (Arnold Schwarzenegger). With the help of a magic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At Film Forum 2, a series of films by Edward Wood, Jr.

ticket, he crosses into Jack's world: an unreal place, where the hero always wins under a roasting sun and never gets more than a flesh wound. His adversaries may look like clichés—Charles Dance as a quiet hit man; Anthony Quinn, in his traditional look-at-me mode, as a Sicilian mobster—but that is precisely the point: movie conventions exist to be mocked, and "Last Action Hero" is determined to have fun with them. There isn't a trace of acid; the director, John McTiernan, remains devoted to the genre that he mastered in "Die Hard." But the scattiness of the film—the way that it slips between fact and fiction, and fidgets from one gag to the next—may still be enough to shake the confidence of a young audience brought up on Schwarzenegger pictures; everything they used to believe in, all the toy violence and dizzy stuntwork, is being snapped back in their faces. The movie labors the point, and outstays its welcome; but it's a bright and daring direction for Schwarzenegger to have taken, and therefore one that he may live to regret.—A.L. (7/5/93) (34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Magnificent Obsession (1935)—This first version of the inspirational Lloyd C. Douglas novel—starring Irene Dunne as the virtuous widow and Robert Taylor as the drunk driver who was responsible for her husband's death—should certainly have been the last, but the woebegone trickeries of the material made the movie a four-handkerchief hit, and damned if Ross Hunter didn't produce another version in 1954 (with Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson), and the slop made money all over again. Irene Dunne spends a lot of time in the hospital and is at her most infuriatingly gallant and womanly; Sara Haden and Theodore Von Eltz don't help much. Directed by John M. Stahl, not known for his sense of humor, though Charles Butterworth manages a funny scene or two.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 18.)

Much Ado About Nothing—On the sunny side of the Bard. Kenneth Branagh leads us through the tiffs and deceptions of Shakespeare's comedy, all shot in and around a Tuscan villa. Branagh does not pay much heed to the virtues of restraint. This is confirmed by most of the performances—Branagh and Emma Thompson as Benedick and Beatrice, splashing out with grand comic gestures, and a mangy Dogberry from an unintelligible Michael Keaton. The movie's jollity feels forced—it's more of a guided tour than a relaxed show of wit. What potency there is comes from the characters who refuse to be gripped by good cheer—Don John, played by Keanu Reeves as a pinup with malice, and Don Pedro, played by Denzel Washington, whose cool gravity shames the rest of the movie.—A.L. (5/10/93) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

1941 (1979)—Steven Spielberg tried out new things in this intricate slapstick farce, from a script by Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale. The movie has a choppy beginning: it seems to start with the story (about civil defense and a long Japanese submarine off the West Coast) already under way. And Spielberg overdoes some of the broad, cartoon aspects—several of the performers seem to be carrying placards telling you what's wacko about them. But the movie gets better and better: the U.S.O. jitterbug number is a great piece of film choreography and the film over all is an amazing, orgiastic comedy, with the pop culture of an era compacted into a day and a night. There are such surprising slapstick payoffs that the film's commercial failure in this country didn't make much sense. It was accused of gigantism, and it did seem huge, though part of what was so disarmingly fresh about it was the miniature re-creation of Hollywood Boulevard at night in 1941, with little floodlights illuminating the toy cars tootling around the corners and toy planes flying so low they were buzzing through the streets. The movie gives you the feeling of a madly happy playroom.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 15.)

Orlando—Sally Potter's film is based on Virginia Woolf's 1928 novel. The story is a fragile piece of whimsy about an English nobleman born in the Elizabethan era who does not grow old or die and thus becomes the central figure in a series of historical tableaux that take the viewer right into the twentieth century; at a certain point, the title character discovers that he has turned into a woman. Potter (who also wrote the screenplay) takes Woolf's exercise in frivolity awfully seriously; the movie is like a Benny Hill sketch performed with fringe-theatre solemnity. And if it weren't for bad acting, this picture wouldn't have any acting at all. Tilda Swinton, who plays Orlando, may not actually wink at the audience, but she always looks as if she were about to. Her smug performance is perfectly suited to the film's arch, knowing tone.—T.R. (6/14/93) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Sleepless in Seattle—With Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, directed by Nora Ephron. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Beekman, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)—Despite its European never-never-land setting and an outright horrifying villainess, the Disney version of the Grimm's fairy tale is a pleasing, down-to-earth American princess fantasy. Disney gave us a Snow White who whistles while she works, enlists an entire peaceable kingdom of animals to help her do dishes and windows, and succeeds at getting seven childlike, scruffy, and bumptious men—who appear to be made of plant bulbs and partly filled potato sacks—to clean up their acts. In her own fluty tones, she means business. The animation is literal-minded but luxurious.—M.S. (Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, and Olympia. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, and 86th Street East Twin; through July 15, matinées only.)

What's Love Got to Do with It—The film version of Tina Turner's life isn't bad, considering that her story inconveniently lacks the tragic ending that filmmakers usually require to give shape to the rambling, unstructured existence of a musician. Tina, at fifty-three, is still performing and recording, and in the absence of the snuffed-out-in-her-prime option the screenwriter, Kate Lanier, and the director, Brian Gibson, have constructed the movie as a kind of feminist survival story: Tina (Angela Bassett) rises to fame as part of a husband-and-wife act, the Ike and Tina Turner Revue, but then breaks away from her brutal, domineering spouse (Laurence Fishburne) and climbs back to the top of the charts on her own. Bassett scrupulously imitates Tina's spectacular dance moves—the musical numbers are superbly staged—but there's no let-it-rip joy in her performances, and not much sex either. Fishburne's astonishing portrayal of Ike is what holds the movie together. The actor builds, in precise increments, a devastating portrait of a macho control freak; he even finds a kind of ghastly humor in the character's madness.—T.R. (6/28/93) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through July 15.)

MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

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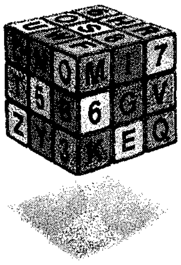

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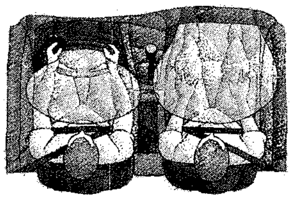

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

ROLE MODEL

When Ted Koppel needed gang members for a live broadcast about the 1992 Los Angeles riots, he did what the "CBS Evening News" did, and what a *Harper's* editor did, and what Hollywood writers still do: he called a woman named Léon Bing, a middle-aged white fashion model turned author. In the sixties, Léon Bing was the top model for Rudi Gernreich, who is still best remembered for his topless bathing suit. Bing had jet-black hair, which she wore in a Louise Brooks cut, and pale skin. She looked, she says, like a Klimt painting. Today, she lives in a small courtyard apartment in Pasadena. Her hair is shoulder-length, and streaked with gray. She writes at her kitchen table, surrounded by a reassuring clutter of framed family photographs, piled-up books, and eclectic old furniture.

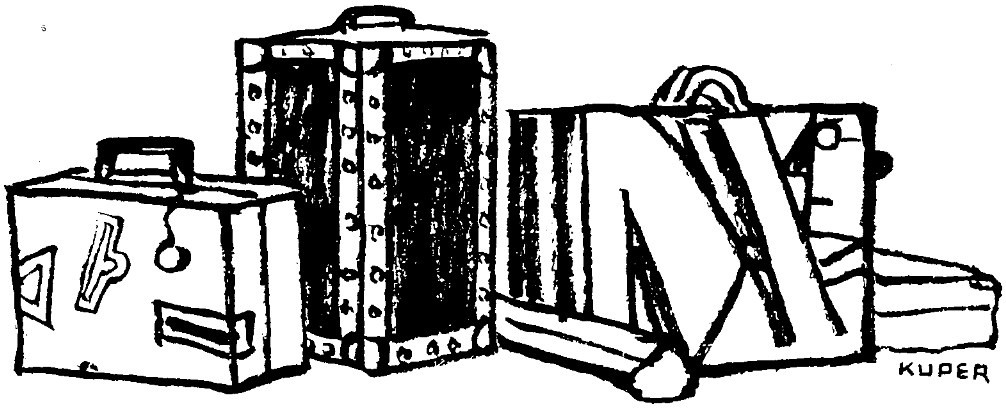
Léon Bing is her real name. She was raised by her well-to-do grandparents in a sprawling bungalow in Oakland. There were boarding schools (Miss Head's School for Girls and Sacred Heart Academy), ballet classes, and piano lessons; Paderewski was a family friend, and Artur Schnabel performed in her grandparents' living room. After the University of Southern California ("My family would have much preferred Radcliffe or Vassar"), she married, had a daughter, divorced, and met Gernreich.

When she gave up modelling, in the mid-seventies, she lived for almost six years in the Hollywood Hills with a "gorgeous" ex-con from Ozone Park—"the kind of guy you walk in with and the band strikes up the theme from 'The Godfather,' " she recalls. That's all she will say about those years, except to add, "I had to find another way of showing off, which is where writing came in."

She began with articles for *LA Weekly* on such subjects as teen-age punks living in abandoned buildings in Venice and rich kids in private drug-rehab hospitals. Her first book, "Do or Die," which came out in 1991, and had required four years of research, was a chilling account of life inside L.A.'s South Central gangs. "I wrote about gangs before it was fashionable," she says. "Every newscast I heard, every little article buried in the metro section—they weren't about real people. They were about some other species. I thought, This is wrong, these are American teen-agers, our future, and they are killing each other on the streets of L.A."

When "Nightline" first called and asked if she would come on, she explains, "I said I could do even better. I'm no expert, it's the guys who are the experts, so I expedited things." Earlier, *Harper's* had asked her to organize a symposium with Crips and Bloods. And after reading her book William Broyles, Jr., a former editor of *Newsweek* and the co-creator of the TV series "China Beach," also got in touch. He was researching a new project called "South Central," so Bing introduced him to Monster Kody, an Eight-Tray Gangster Crip serving time in a California state prison for robbery, assault, and grand theft auto. "They were both combat veterans, and I wanted them to meet," she says. "So Bill and I went up to the prison, and it turned out to be very good for both of them." The network didn't pick up the pilot, but Broyles got Monster a New York literary agent and encouraged him to write his autobiography. Monster's book, for which the Atlantic Monthly Press paid a hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar advance, came out last month. It's a grim portrait of an urban terrorist.

But Bing has moved on, and doesn't want to write about gangs now. "It was time not to be so involved as a journalist anymore," she says. "To me, there's something pitiful about just taking one



PETER KUPER

subject and running it into the ground for the rest of your life."

Next month, HarperCollins will publish Bing's second book, "Smoked: A True Story About the Kids Next Door." It's about three upper-middle-class girls who were shotgunned to death in the guesthouse of one of the victims' parents, less than a mile from where Bing lives. Their killers were two boys who had known the girls since grade school. But, despite the sensational subject matter, Bing won't be promoting the book on every afternoon talk show. "Miss Head's School for Girls dies hard," she says, with a laugh. "And there are certain things you just don't do. You don't stoop to conquer."

SLUMP

LIKE most of the people who haunt Shea Stadium these days, Steve Calandro is a diehard Mets fan. He's also a vender, and the venders, like the Mets, aren't having a terribly good year. The venders work for the Harry M. Stevens Corporation, and when things are slow, as they have been this season, who gets to work is determined by seniority, and so is who sells what. Beer, which Mr. Calandro sells, is the most coveted item, but even beer sales are off approximately thirty per cent.

Mr. Calandro started working as a vender at Shea in 1972. "I was putting myself through Baruch College at the time, working both Shea and Yankee Stadiums," he said recently, standing in the venders' equivalent of backstage—a room under the stands, lined with racks of empty trays waiting to be filled with cups of beer or soda. "I thought I would only do this job for a few years, just to get me through school, but it grows on you, and I'm still at it. I got a full-time job at Smith Barney in 1977, doing collections in their debits department, so now I'm running from my suit to my vender's apron. Most of the guys have full-time jobs. We make decent money here, but there are only eighty-one home games each year."

Mr. Calandro was joined by a colleague named Craig Van Steenbergen, a licensed architect from Westchester, who usually sells ice cream, though he sometimes also does soda. Mr. Van Steenbergen is a relative newcomer at Shea, having worked there for just five years. "The senior guys want to hold on to their seniority," he said. "The money's not bad, and then there are the perks. You get to go to the games. You get very good at seeing the game in glimpses. Basically, it's like listening to the game on the radio, except the fans are the announcers."

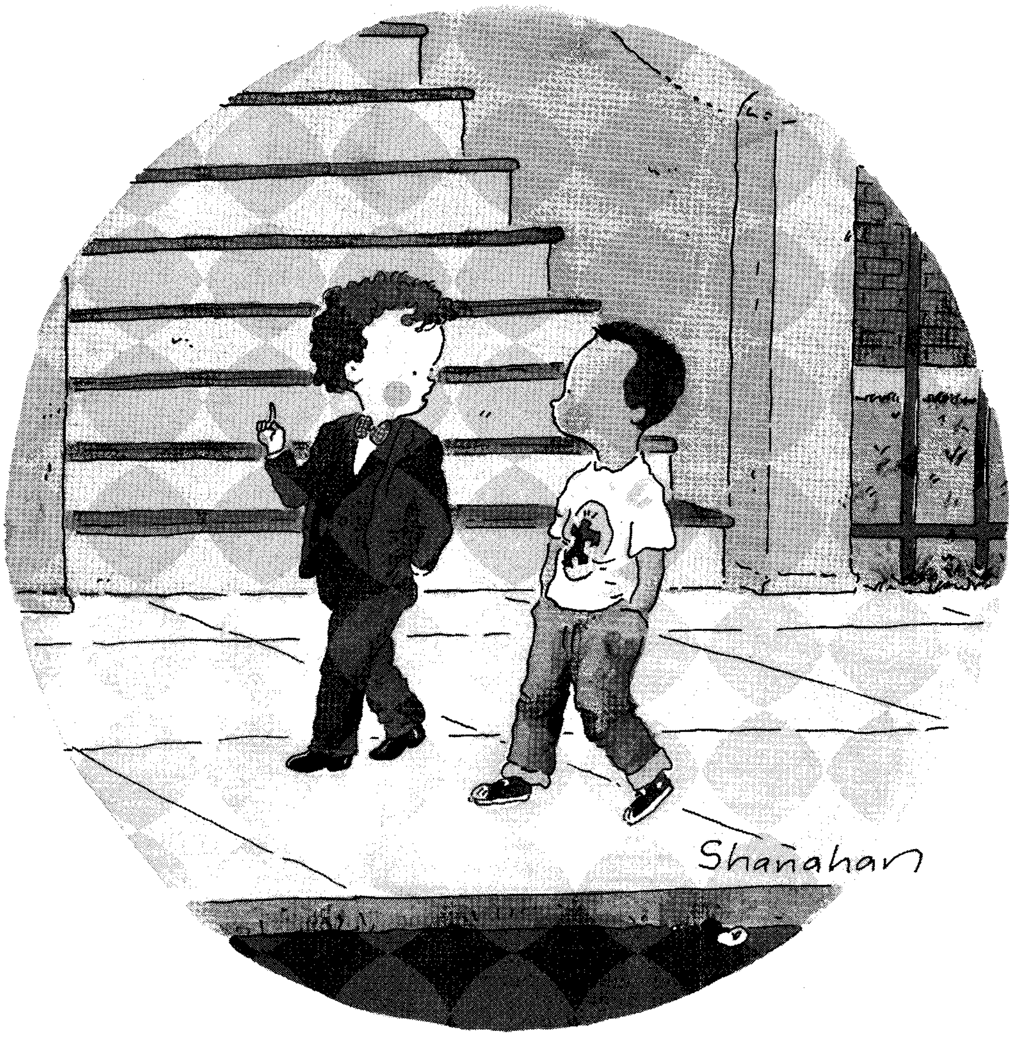
Mr. Calandro has been an ardent Mets fan since the Mets came into being, in 1962. "My dad took me to just about every game between 1962 and 1971," he said. "I've seen Joe Christopher play, Cliff Cook, Jim Hickman. For a while, I taped all the games, and if they won I'd save the tape and watch it during the winter. I did that from around 1985 to 1989. Beginning in 1990, the seasons just started ending quicker and quicker."

"We're all waiting for that key September or October," Mr. Van Steenbergen said.

"Yeah," Mr. Calandro said. "When the Mets are in a pennant race, and another team in the race comes in here—oh, boy." His face brightened. "Those series when you get a hundred and twenty thousand in here over three games—oh, man! Like when St. Louis came in here in '85. That was incredible."

"But sometimes you don't do as well as you think on games like that," Mr. Van Steenbergen said. "You can't get through the aisles, because they're so crowded. And then sometimes people get so excited about the game they're not even thinking about eating." Then he added, "Of course, all that is sort of a moot point. It's gonna be like a ghost town here in September."

"I keep a book of what I sell every game," Mr. Calandro said. "Things have got so bad that for the first time since 1983 I got bumped down to peanuts."



"One word, Timmy—dinosaurs."

RADICAL INTERPRETATIONS

WILLIAM KUNSTLER, the enduringly incendiary attorney, is keeping an eye on his theatrical career. The other day, during a break from his representation of three principal figures in the investigation arising out of the bombing of the World Trade Center, Kunstler recalled that he gave his first performance (in a comedy called "Whistling in the Dark") at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, on a memorable evening—December 7, 1941. "I made my Broadway début in 'The Trial of the Catonsville Nine,' which Daniel Berrigan wrote about his trial, when I defended him," he said. "I played myself, and I could never remember my lines. Finally, Leland Hayward, the producer, said, 'Just remember your cue lines and do your best after that.' " In recent years, Kunstler has focussed on film work, including the role of Jim Morrison's lawyer in Oliver Stone's "The Doors." "Oliver said it was O.K. if I used some real material from when I defended Lenny Bruce. In my summation, I said, 'If you decide this case on anything but the evidence, you'll wake up in the middle of the night screaming.' Coming up with my own material gave me a bigger part, too." Kunstler played a judge in Spike Lee's "Malcolm X," and last month he performed his latest role, in "Carlito's Way," which stars Al Pacino. "The guy I play is an old lecher, and he goes to a strip bar with his young girlfriend," Kunstler, who is seventy-four, said. "My daughter Sarah plays my girlfriend. She's sixteen. They put her in this slinky white dress, high heels, and platinum wig. She looked great. In my scene, I don't say anything—I just have to stuff dollar bills into the strippers' G-string straps. I never thought I'd get tired of looking at bare asses, but after eighteen takes, my God! This doesn't mean I endorse the film," he added. "I mean, politically I didn't think it was so great, but I need to do one movie a year to keep my Screen Actors Guild card."

RAVE SUMMIT

ALL Fourth of July weekend, four nights in a row, DB was raving. On Friday night, he worked his usual two sets as a d.j. at NASA (Nocturnal Audio & Sensory Awakening), perhaps the city's coolest weekly overground rave,

ANDERS WENNGREN

KA-BOOM!

I HAPPEN to believe that one of the principles commemorated by the Fourth of July is the right of the suburban citizen to set off his own fireworks. This is not a popular position. It is not shared, for example, by most public-safety authorities, by the local police, or (sometimes) by my wife, who last year ended up taking the rap when, experimenting with new places to stash a lighted cherry bomb, I managed to blow up our mailbox just as a patrol car cruised by. Nonetheless, I have persisted in my delinquency, inspired in part by the thrilling Fourths of my boyhood. I started my adult fireworks career a few years ago with sparklers, then graduated to firecrackers and Roman candles, and lately I've been test-firing some awesome larger devices. You could call me the Grucci of the back yard.

This year, my arsenal included a dozen little winged cardboard tubes called Sunflowers, which were supposed to rise up from the ground and then hover magically, like gleaming halos. Most of them didn't. Instead, they lurched along the ground, fizzing and sputtering, or—in one worrisome instance—dived right for the open window of my car. Some of the bottle rockets didn't work, either. There was ignition, a satisfying sizzle and stream of sparks, then that exquisite moment of suspense savored by all fireworks buffs, and then—nothing. A dud. But the Saturn Missiles Battery was *excellent:* twenty-five separate salvos packed, like birthday candles, in a square yellow box, they launched themselves with bangs and whistles and bright-red trails of light all over the yard. The Roman candles were neat, too. Ten charges in a tube, each rising higher, and banging louder, than the last. The final shot rose up over my roof, soared above the hemlocks at the edge of the yard, and, for a moment, bathed the driveway in unearthly red light.

It was a hot, buggy night. The kids got tired after a while and went in. My wife watched a little longer from the kitchen window, and then, apparently satisfied that I wasn't going to blow a thumb off, she turned out the light and went to bed. I finished the last of the bottle rockets alone, feeling a little sorry for myself but mostly happy. It occurred to me that the lighting of fireworks—at least in its suburban, domesticated version—is properly a melancholy, middle-aged pursuit. You don't understand this when you're a kid, but what fireworks really celebrate is failure (all those duds), brevity, and insignificance. A flash, a bang, and then silence, darkness, a few shreds of burned cardboard scattered on the grass, and a puff of blue-gray smoke uncoiling in front of you with that unmistakable whiff of sulfur and saltpeter: the smell of loss—or maybe hellfire and brimstone. (Smells pretty good, actually.)

The best firework I ever set off was given to me last year by a friend. It was Chinese, and came in an artful little tissue-paper package that afforded no clue to the metaphorical riches inside. I don't recall whether it had a name, but it could have been called Life So Far. I lit the fuse, and, after a heart-stopping moment, everything happened at once: bangs, pops, whistles, towers of sparks. A pause, and then from the smoldering wreckage a little yellow house or pagoda silently arose, story by story, until it stood about six inches high. Each story was illuminated by miniature cellophane windows, which glowed from within for several seconds, and then the lights dimmed and flickered and went out, leaving the house sitting there alone on the lawn—a tiny monument to something or other. —CHARLES MCGRATH

"Now, don't go calling the sex police, or anything, but I think you're swell."

• •

which takes place at a downtown club called Shelter. On Saturday night, after only a few (daylight) hours of sleep, he packed up his twelve-inch singles in a pair of black canvas shoulder bags and drove across New Jersey to Pennsylvania with his friend and colleague Gary Pini, a vice-president of Profile Records. They were heading for an all-night underground rave called "The End of the World," which was supposed to take place, under the full moon, on a mountaintop near the Appalachian Trail about fifteen miles north of Allentown.

Underground raves are the most esteemed raves. A tall, lanky, thirty-year-old Englishman, whose haircut looks like a close-cropped black skullcap, DB is a veteran of the British rave scene, where, in abandoned buildings and warehouses, tens of thousands of kids took Ecstasy and danced all night. DB witnessed the police crackdown that all but killed off the do-it-yourself rave culture in Britain in the late eighties, and in 1989 he joined the migration of British d.j.s and impresarios who came to America and helped kick-start the scene here.

The directions to "The End of the World" had been sketchy, but around midnight DB and Gary found it, at the far end of a dirt field on the grounds of a ski resort. A huge white tent with open sides stood in front of a long line of trucks, vans, and station wagons. Techno music was blasting from enormous speakers stacked both inside the tent and alongside an outdoor cinema, where psychedelic computer graphics were projected onto a billowing cloth screen. Power lines and wires snaked everywhere underfoot (the rave organizers had evidently tapped into the electricity at the ski lodge), along with black water-filled hoses for cooling the lasers. Young men with ponytails were running back and forth between the tent and the trucks and yelling into walkie-talkies.

DB got his records, went over to where a few other d.j.s were standing, and began setting up. He was a little worried, because the promoters had clearly devoted more attention to the vast logistical and technological requirements of a first-class rave than to advertising. There is a fine line between letting kids know and alerting the local police, and this time the organizers had erred on the side of caution. Only a few dozen teen-agers and young adults lurked in and around the tent. Every few minutes, one of two fog machines in the tent hissed out a white cloud of vanilla-scented fog that swallowed them up.

DB started with an ethereal reggae-flavored song, and kids filtered onto the dance floor as the fog machines cranked up and color spotlights pierced the space with almost palpable light. By 2 A.M., there were perhaps two hundred ravers in all—far from a complete flop, but not exactly the spontaneous eruption that DB and Gary had hoped for. Even if most of the ravers were paying customers (the price of admission was fifteen dollars), the night was clearly a commercial disaster.

The energy of the rave rose and fell through the night. Some of the songs that DB played were full of burbles and beeps, while others shimmered with grand-piano flourishes and gospel choruses. Sometimes only a handful of people danced, and then the crowd would grow into a fogbound mass of gyrating boppers. At four-fifteen, DB started his last set. The dance floor was still filled with haze, and the hundred-and-fifty-beat-per-minute techno sounds still kept a dozen or so unflagging kids going, but through the open sides of the tent the outline of trees appeared against a robin's-egg-blue morning sky.

An hour and a half later, DB and Gary said goodbye to the other d.j.s and, after exchanging telephone numbers and tapes and grabbing a handful of flyers for future raves, started driving back to New York. Still wide awake, DB was undaunted by the fact that he was scheduled to work at the Palladium that night, and that he had a private rave to play on Monday. "Too bad about the turnout," he said, but then he changed the subject and began describing his dream, the Holy Grail of raves: Ravestock, an unprecedented giant gathering of rave kids. "It'll be wicked," he said. ♦

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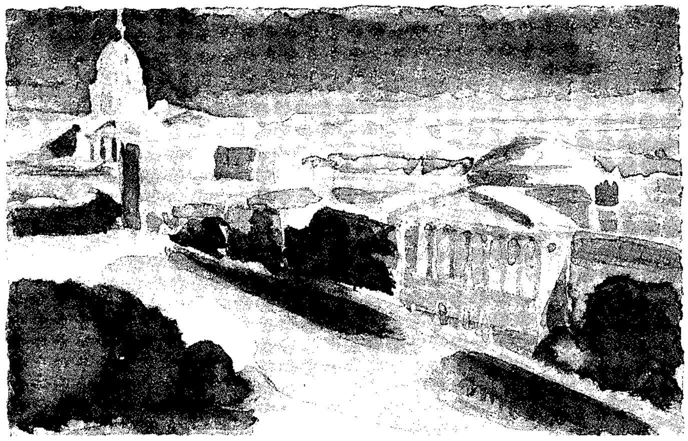
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICES

While David Stockman took the rap for Reagan's voodoo economics, some of his unrepentant cohorts now assail Clinton as he battles the deficit they helped create.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL



MARIO MICOSSI

THESE days, David Stockman leads the life of Prescott Bush before politics—that of a Wall Street banker with a home in Greenwich, Connecticut. "We just call them 'buyouts' now. They used to be called 'leveraged buyouts,'" Stockman says about his work with the Blackstone Group, the boutique investment-banking firm where he's a partner. Shuttling between a Manhattan aerie and his suburban retreat, he is far removed from the trench warfare of Washington. "Time flies," he says.

Twelve years ago, Stockman was, of course, the driving force behind Ronald Reagan's economic policy. As the director of the Office of Management and Budget, he devised the strategy that carried Reagan to a happy ending. "In the timing of the economic cycle, it was easier to skirt the responsibility," he says. But past policy—the preëmptive power of the deficit—is crushing present possibilities. Now, pinned down in a hazardous no man's land, Bill Clinton suffers the wounds. There appears to be no place he can stand outside the deficit's shadow. "Clinton is the innocent who went to some country hollow and got caught between the Hatfields and the McCoys," Stockman told me. "The job of every President since Reagan—a sunshine boy who didn't want to acknowledge that the deficit was his problem—is to distribute and administer pain. Clinton is mired neck deep."

"Guilty" is the plea registered by Murray Weidenbaum, Reagan's first chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, about his Administration's responsibility for creating the burden of the deficit. "Stockman's plan is still working," Weidenbaum says. "It's very hard to explain. The farther away in time one gets, the harder it is to explain. Something from 1981 is determining the present."

Stockman has been warning against the consequences of his economic strategy since November, 1981, when *The Atlantic* published William Greider's account of interviews with him. Stockman's memoir, "The Triumph of Politics," which appeared in 1986, the year after he left the government, is a gothic horror story of Reagan's Washington. Since then, his life has been private, and he has steered clear of uttering public opinions. But over time his condemnation of what Reagan wrought has only intensified. Watching Clinton grapple with the politics of the deficit transports Stockman back to the scene of the crime. "No one imagined how bad the outcome would be," he says. "It was really an unnecessary chapter. It got away from us. It would have been far better had it not happened."

IT was David Gergen who brought David Stockman to Ronald Reagan's attention. In September, 1980, the candidate was rehearsing for his debates about an hour away from Washington, at the Virginia estate of Senator John Warner and his then wife, Elizabeth Taylor. The first debate was not against Jimmy Carter but against John Anderson, the moderate Republican turned independent. Gergen, in charge of debate research, was working at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank that had become known as the seedbed of a new doctrine: supply-side economics. According to the swoop of the Laffer curve, cutting taxes—especially the top rates—would unleash the forces of production and, miraculously, increase federal revenues. Stockman, an earnest, intense representative from Michigan, was a charter member of the supply-side "cabal" (as its chief promoter, the former *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer Jude Wanniski, called it), but it was his service as Anderson's chief aide on the House Republican Conference that prompted Gergen to recruit him as Anderson's stand-in for the mock debate—a portentous casting decision.

After Reagan's election, Stockman, with other supply-siders, wrote a memo entitled "On the Danger of a GOP Economic Dunkirk." They urged that the President-elect "tell the Congress and the nation that the economic, financial, budget, energy, and regulatory conditions he inherited are far worse than anyone had imagined." Gergen was put in charge of what was known as the First Ninety Days Project. The supply-siders lobbied hard for Stockman's appointment as budget director.

The son of fruit farmers, Stockman was a reflexive rural conservative who became a campus leftist at Michigan State in the nineteen-sixties. After graduation, he entered Harvard Divinity School. (At the height of the Vietnam War, attendance there earned a deferment.) He also got a job as babysitter for the children of Professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who met Stockman's radicalism with bemused skepticism. Gradually, Stockman reverted to his native Republicanism, and adopted Anderson as his mentor. He moved to Washington, where his offerings in small conservative journals and his presence at the seminars of the ideology factories gained him connections. Stockman the thinker was touted even by the neoconservative "godfather" Irving Kristol in the *Wall Street Journal*—a column that Stockman turned into priceless campaign literature in 1976, the year he was elected to Congress.

Stockman was thirty-four years old when Reagan appointed him to head the O.M.B. His straight, graying hair was shaggy, his suits were slightly ill-fitting, and his gaze (through oversized glasses) was fierce. In some obvious ways, Stockman and Reagan were alike. Both were sons of the bucolic Midwest who grew up in modest circumstances; both were political liberals who turned right. But in truth they were opposites in almost every respect. While Reagan napped, Stockman slaved: at five in the afternoon, the workday for the President was concluded; for his budget chief, a long night of labor lay ahead. Stockman played the Calvinist to Reagan's pleasure-seeker, the worrier to the blithe spirit. He was left to take care of the hard realities.

According to the tax-cutting budget that Stockman devised, the deficit would be zero in 1984 (Reagan's reëlection year); by 1986, the budget would show a surplus of twenty-eight billion dollars. This projection, however, was soon sardonically referred to, even within the Administration, as Rosy Scenario. In Congress, the tax-cutting soon became a movable feast for special interests. "It started in the Republican caucus," Stockman recalls. "Everyone wanted something. That set the pattern. It cut a new contour in the whole process of government—there hadn't been large-scale fiscal politics practiced earlier. The budget, on its own momentum, was always close to balanced. It would cycle up a bit. If you didn't do anything, there was no harm done. You were rolling along in fairly solvent condition. Basically, the underlying fundamentals were sound. When it fell apart in 1981 with the tax-cut bill, you entered the opposite world."

On June 5, 1981, senior Presidential aides and economic principals met to decide whether or not to admit publicly that Rosy Scenario was just that. (Stockman was not present. He sent a deputy, with instructions to argue in favor of the confession.) "You mean it really is voodoo economics, after all?" James Baker, the chief of staff, asked. Baker—supported by the others, including Gergen—went on to argue against self-exposure. In their calculations, honesty would kill the tax plan, a new version of which was to be introduced before Congress the following week, and immediate political success transcended long-term economic effect. Thus, Stockman writes in his book, "gridlock" was created: "We had painted ourselves into a corner."

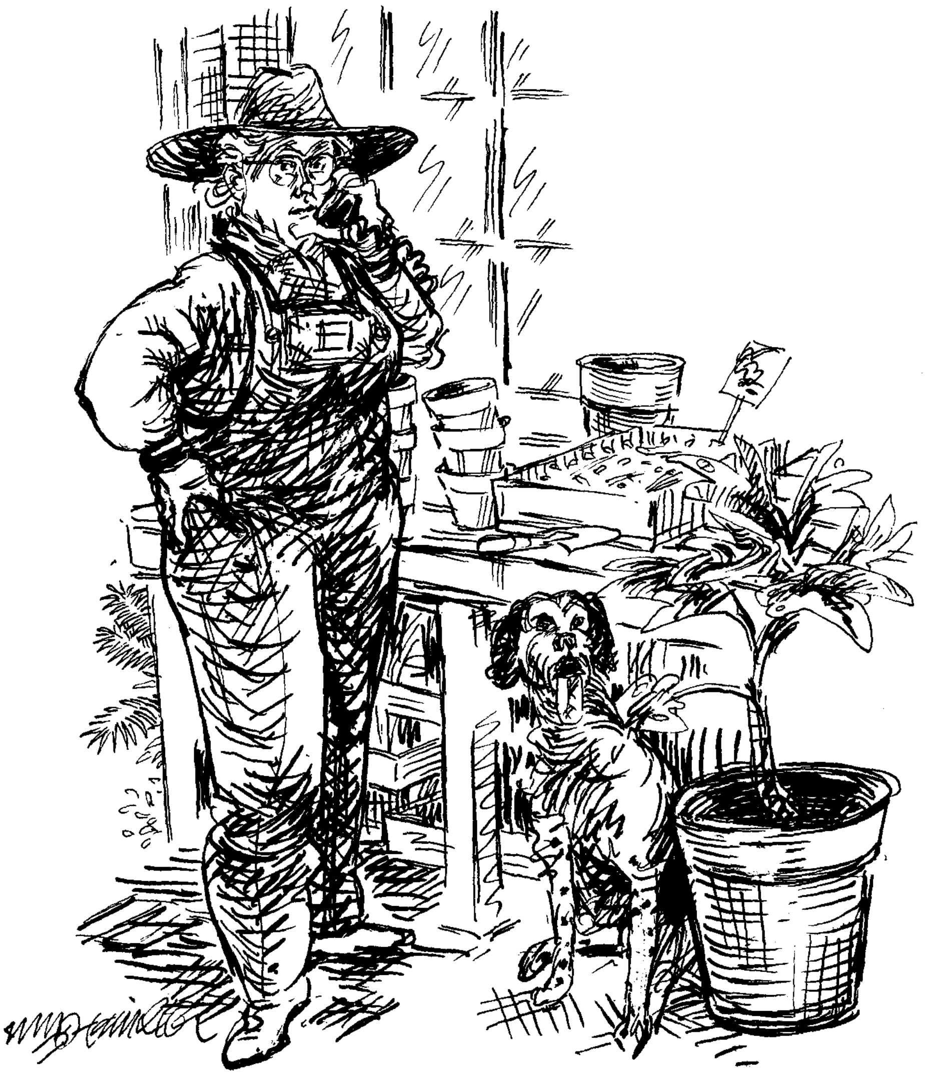
"What happens if the economic assumptions we've been using turn out to be wrong?" Stockman suggested to Reagan on July 15th. Reagan would not consider even a hint of apostasy.

Murray Weidenbaum then told Reagan that a recession was about to begin. "What was normally a very nice man gave me the coldest stare," he says. "That cold stare took days to dissipate. Maybe he didn't expect the bad news. I'm no psychologist."

Stockman, already disillusioned, attempted what he called "the big fix"—to somehow come up with spending cuts that would compensate for the tax cuts. Earlier, he had appended an asterisk (a "magic asterisk," he called it) to the budget to signify spending cuts to be named later. They never came, and his own search proved a politically impossible task. That November, *The Atlantic* article appeared, with Stockman describing supply-side economics as a "Trojan horse," and saying, "None of us really understands what's going on with all these numbers."

"We could have had a midcourse correction," Stockman says now. "There was more courage in 1982." In fact, in March, 1982, the President authorized Baker to negotiate a deal with the Democrats. For months, a bipartisan group of senators, representatives, and Administration officials known as the Gang of Seventeen met to thrash out a plan. "Everyone was ready," Stockman says. "But Reagan said no. He wouldn't allow it. He didn't believe there was a problem. That was his selectivity on the facts of life. The whole thing got turned into a cynical, politicized surreal substitute for sane fiscal governance." Within months, however, the recession lifted: it was morning in America again. Reagan never submitted a budget in balance. Nor did he submit a budget that was ever taken seriously by Congress.

But Reagan was not indifferent to deficits. Despite rhetorical bemoanings, he came to regard them as a positive good, according to Weidenbaum, who quit out of frustration in 1982 and is now a professor of economics at Washington University, in St. Louis. "On the question of fiscal deficits, I recall his views going through three stages: one, they won't oc-



"Incidentally, I'm ordering all this fertilizer for peaceful purposes."

cur; two, they'll be temporary; three, when they stick, they serve a good purpose—they keep the liberals from new spending programs. Oh, sure, that was Reagan." The President loved to tell a story about a boy who, confronted with a room full of horse manure, would insist that there was a pony in there. That pony was the one Reagan rode into the sunset.

"WHAT are you doing?" Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, asked Baker upon hearing George Bush's "read my lips" pledge during his 1988 campaign.

"We're going to elect a President of the United States. We'll talk about *that* after he's elected," Baker replied. The lesson of Reagan seemed to be that fiscal policy could be finessed indefinitely. But it couldn't, as Bush later discovered.

Bill Clinton is "getting a fast education in how decadent this whole fiscal process has become," Stockman says. "The thing has decayed so far you have to have this fruitcake," he adds, referring to Ross Perot. Stockman says of Clinton's efforts, "I would give him credit for labelling the problem as Problem No. 1. He's addressing it in an honest way, putting tough measures on the table. You can always make the case that they should cut spending, but after twelve years it's obvious they're not going to. It's a phony debate that the Republicans and some of the Democrats have put up. It's a pretty cowardly display—not only cowardly but intellectually ragged. It's a pretension that anyone is seriously interested in spending cuts. Rather than look at what is needed, the response is: How do we posture? Those Western senators ought to be taken out to a corral and shot." The Republicans, he adds, are "totally irresponsible."

The Democrats, as Stockman sees it, are haunted by their willingness to enter into the Reagan Revolution. "Clinton is paying the price for the Democrats' colossal political mistake in July, 1981, when they decided to join the bidding war, getting concessions on the tax bill. Lloyd Bentsen voted for it. Moynihan voted for it, even though he mused at the time that it might not be a responsible plan. Rosty led the charge on the House side, and now he's sentenced to clean up the mess. It was a tremendous mistake, dramatically reducing the revenue base of the United States government, preventing the funding of programs they already had, not to mention any unfinished agenda. It was totally against their interest to support that massive tax-cutting bill. They were like an army in the heat of combat disarming themselves. Why did they do it? It's unfathomable."

Today, many of the main players from that budget drama are on the stage, in different roles. "Gergen was the one writing the words that put the ball over the goal line," Stockman says. "He put all the positive spin on the Reagan miracle. What comes around goes around. Gergen was spin-doctoring, now he's in the spin." Phil Gramm, the Republican senator who hectors Clinton for raising revenue by taxation to meet the deficit, was, as a Democratic representative, an original co-sponsor of the Reagan tax-cut measure. Bob Dole, the Republican leader, with the Presidential rival Gramm in his peripheral vision, slams Clinton with the phrase "tax and spend," though he himself called for tax increases in the early nineteen-eighties to deal with Reagan's deficits.

President Clinton, the "innocent," repudiates the past but is trapped by it. In his struggle to restore the means of positive government, his themes of hope and the future have been slipping away from him as he faces the difficult problem of explaining the necessity of solvency and the connection between means and ends.

David Stockman, a mere observer of the doomsday machine he set in motion, says, "There's not enough room for the new, and the old has a constituency. Unless you've been part of the process, you can't appreciate the existentialist dimension of it." ♦

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BRAVE NEW WORLD DEPARTMENT

TREMORS IN THE HOTHOUSE

The battle lines are being drawn for the soul of the American consumer as agribusiness launches the first genetically altered supermarket tomato.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

IN most parts of the world, people do not eat fresh tomatoes out of season. The supermarket tomato is a peculiarly American idea. Americans expect to have fresh vegetables in the supermarket all year long, regardless of season, and plant breeders have done what they can to accommodate them. Corn and peas have been bred to convert sugar into starch more slowly, lettuce to retain water longer, and potatoes to resist rot. The pepper, a cousin of the tomato, has been very satisfactorily adapted to supermarket culture—tricked out in a palette of designer colors and endowed with a shelf life of more than a month. But the tomato has refused to go along with the program. Plant breeders have created attractive tomatolike objects that are durable enough to be transported long distances without turning into paste, but while these inventions are useful to tomato producers (they reduce "the shrink," which is the number of tomatoes lost in transit), they don't taste like tomatoes, a significant disadvantage to the consumer. The fresh tomato, endowed with every advantage on the vine, spectacularly fails to achieve its potential in the supermarket. The flesh is cottony and insipid, and the gel—the gluey liquid in which the seeds are suspended, and which is the source of most of the tomato's flavor—sometimes falls out when you slice the tomato, leaving a cavity surrounded by a tough tomato hide.

JARRETT HUDDLESTON

In spite of widespread unhappiness with the supermarket tomato—in a recent Department of Agriculture study, consumers rated the tomato thirty-first out of thirty-one produce items in order of satisfaction—the average Americ[illegible] buys eighteen pounds of tomatoes a year, more than any other item of produce except lettuce and potatoes. The fresh-tomato market in the United States is four billion dollars, which is about the size of the whole biotechnology industry. How much more consumers might spend on a tomato that actually tastes like a tomato is a question that has long tantalized people in the business world. Charles Bluhdorn, the chairman of Gulf & Western, invested in the tomato business in the nineteen-sixties, and in the late seventies Jack Dorrance, the majority owner of Campbell Soup, made the development of a good supermarket tomato a personal crusade. The tomato got the better of these men. In recent years, Holland tomatoes, Israeli tomatoes, Sicilian cherry tomatoes, French hothouse tomatoes, vine-ripened tomatoes, and hydroponic tomatoes have turned up in produce aisles around the country, and, while many of these varieties taste better than run-of-the-mill supermarket tomatoes, none have what people in the tomato business call "that back-yard flavor." Cherry tomatoes occasionally do ha[illegible] the back-yard flavor, but there isn't much of a market for cherries in the United States. According to market research, Americans like their tomatoes big and fat.

This fall, around the time frost kills the last tomato plants growing in back yards around Chicago, and the taste of summer begins to fade from the palates of tomato-lovers everywhere, a new, genetically engineered tomato will appear in Midwestern supermarkets. The name of the tomato is the Flavr Savr. It will be the first food created by the use of recombinant DNA ever to go on sale. Executives at Calgene, a small California biotechnology company that invented the Flavr Savr, are confident that theirs is the tomato others have sought for so long. "Our technology has allowed us to integrate the back-yard flavor back into the tomato," says Stephen Benoit, a vice-president of Calgene Fresh, a subsidiary of Calgene. Roger Salquist, the chief executive officer of Calgene, says, in a characteristic burst of optimism, "We're going to sell a hell of a lot of tomatoes, and the growers, the sellers, our shareholders—everybody is going to get rich."

That Calgene has been able to raise two hundred and ten million dollars over the last decade, a period in which the company has only once made a profit (last year, Calgene lost twenty million dollars), is a fair measure of how good Salquist is at inspiring investors. On Wall Street, anticipation of the tomato's arrival is keen. "The tomato is very important, because it's the first genetically altered food to hit the market," says George Dahlman, a financial analyst with the investment firm Piper Jaffray. "If the tomato succeeds, it's going to be a big lift to all the other genetically altered foods coming along in the pipeline." This spring, a rumor that the Flavr Savr might not be the tomato Calgene has been saying it is—"I heard yesterday that Calgene's tomato doesn't work," one investor said to me at an investment conference in March—caused alarm throughout the biotech industry. Around the same time, Tom Churchwell, the president of Calgene Fresh, seemed to back away from some of Roger Salquist's promotional claims. "We don't have all the back-yard flavor—yet," he told me. "We will. Eventually, we're going to design acidic tomatoes for the New Jersey palate and sweet tomatoes for the Chicago palate." Salquist, however, continued to claim, "We have the back-yard flavor."

The Flavr Savr is not without competitors. DNA Plant Technology, of Cinnaminson, New Jersey, is experimenting with a gene it has manufactured which is based on an anti-freeze gene from an Arctic flounder, in the hope of producing a tomato that can be chilled without being damaged. Other genetically engineered foods in the pipeline include a potato with a chicken gene, a potato with a wax-moth gene, and tobacco with a firefly gene (the plants glow in the dark), which have all been cleared by the Department of Agriculture for field-testing. Two of the country's largest breeders of chickens have done research to develop birds that will grow faster with less feed, and Auburn University, in Alabama, with a similar aim, has spliced a trout gene into a carp. A few years ago, in an effort to produce leaner pork, researchers at the Department of Agriculture's main research center, in Beltsville, Maryland, spliced a human gene into a pig embryo. The pig was born cross-eyed and with a strange, wrinkled face, and with arthritis so severe that it could hardly stand, but the meat was indeed much leaner.

Most people I know say they will try Calgene's tomato, provided it's safe, and extensive testing indicates that it is. However, to Calgene's surprise and bewilderment, some people are actively campaigning against its tomato. The anti-biotechnology activist Jeremy Rifkin is organizing a boycott of the Flavr Savr. "I'm here to tell you this tomato will be dead on arrival," he has said. "This tomato will go under. This tomato will find no market." Rifkin's boycott has found support among people in different areas of environmental politics—organic-food people, biodiversity people, genetic-privacy people—who have their own reasons for not liking recombinant DNA, and all of whom are comfortable with the notion that instead of genetically altering a tomato to suit human habits we should alter our habits to suit the tomato. More than twenty-five hundred restaurants nationwide, including "21," Chez Panisse, and Spago, have said they will not serve Calgene's tomato, and in some restaurant windows one is beginning to see the boycott symbol—a coil of DNA with a red slash through it.

Roger Salquist, whose company has spent twenty-five million dollars to develop the Flavr Savr, believes that his tomato will prevail. "The nice thing about this situation is that all these issues—science, business, people's religion, what have you—come down to a tomato," he told me. "If people like our tomato, the rest of this stuff goes away."

GEORGE BALL'S family has been in the genetics business for three generations. His grandfather bred asters, sweet peas, snapdragons, and calendulas, and eventually turned those interests into Geo. J. Ball, Inc., which has diversified holdings in horticultural research and seed production. George, who is forty-one years old, spent part of his youth on a petunia-breeding farm in Costa Rica and now runs the company. He is also the president of the American Horticultural Society and the chief executive officer of W. Atlee Burpee & Company, the country's largest supplier of seeds for home gardening. George's enthusiasm for what recombinant DNA offers the plant breeder is unclouded by any haunting feeling that man is going to have to pay for overstepping his place in the world. It puzzles George that people doubt or criticize rDNA, as it is known, and he sometimes says that they must be motivated by some sort of "religious thing," although George's faith in rDNA more nearly resembles a religious conviction than anything I encountered on the other side. "I personally believe that this is another green revolution," George says. "It's quantum-leap technology. It's going to be bigger than frozen food."

Edward Madigan, who was Secretary of Agriculture under Bush, is one of many informed and responsible people who agree with George. "The coming of age of biotechnology in agriculture promises to make rapid and far-reaching progress that will dwarf the advances of the previous age of agricultural mechanization and the harnessing of chemistry," Madigan has said. One of the brightest promises held out by rDNA is that it will allow farmers to stop using chemicals. Last year, American farmers dumped some twenty-five million pounds of chemicals on corn alone, to kill rootworm. The Mycogen Corporation, of San Diego, is developing a corn plant that produces the toxin in a bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), which kills rootworm. "It's quite possible that in five years cornfields will be pesticide-free," says Michael Sund, the director of corporate communications at Mycogen.

Many other promises are also made

"Stop worrying about Madonna. She's probably just retooling for her next great surge."

• •

for rDNA: It will increase productivity. It will create crops capable of growing in the deserts of Somalia and in the mountains of Peru. It will give us vegetables higher in nutrients, and cooking oils lower in saturated fat. It will feed the huge increase in population expected in underdeveloped countries over the next twenty-five years. Biotechnology is the one major industry in which the United States is the undisputed world leader; the profits from these products will flow into our country and make us rich again.

As a time-and-labor-saving innovation, rDNA is to classical plant breeding as the computer is to the typewriter. Classical breeding is confining, because the breeder has to breed the selected plant with a close relative, and it is messy, because along with the desired trait the plant inherits a lot of unwanted traits. With recombinant DNA, the breeder can use genes from virtually any species, plant or animal—even human—and he can target each gene precisely, cut it out, clone it, and splice it into the DNA of the selected plant. The basic techniques of recombinant DNA are not difficult. College biology students are using the technology now, and before long it will be possible to synthesize DNA with a home chemistry set.

"It's incredible!" George Ball said as we were eating lunch one day in Manhattan. "What used to take ten years now takes one or two. And the possibilities for new plant varieties are mind-boggling. You know, true blue is a very difficult color to achieve in nature. I believe we'll see a blue rose in three years."

I said, "But isn't there something unnatural about all this?"

George said, "I don't see why. Recombinant DNA is just a way of speeding up what takes place in nature—and maybe of taking nature in a direction it wouldn't go ordinarily, because nature isn't organized that way."

"But isn't recombinant DNA in fact a way of replacing natural selection with human selection?"

"I don't see how man, in using recombinant DNA, is doing something unnatural, when man is part of nature, too."

"Well, what if a genetically engineered organism mutates out of control and attacks Cleveland?"

"Actually, recombinant DNA is safer than classical breeding in that regard, because it reduces the chance of escape mutations. Not that escapes ever happen outside of science-fiction fantasies."

"But don't you worry that we might be upsetting nature's delicate balance?"

"Nature isn't a delicate balance. What's so balanced about it?"

There is no shaking George's faith. Changing the subject, I asked, "So when will Burpee's first recombinant-DNA product appear?"

George looked aghast. "Oh, Burpee doesn't use recombinant DNA. Look at the trouble it's caused Calgene. I can't afford that kind of backlash."

THE headquarters of Calgene is a plain concrete building surrounded by tomato fields, on the edge of Davis, California. Eighty per cent of all the processing tomatoes grown in the United States are grown within fifty miles of the building, including the "square" tomato, which is bred for machine harvesting and represents the pinnacle of a certain kind of tomato technology. In the reception area at Calgene is an illustrated encyclopedia of fruits and vegetables, and I leaf through it while waiting for my tour to begin. The tomato is classified with the vegetables—it was, in fact, declared a vegetable by an act of Congress. Botanically, it is a fruit, because it forms an ovary. I turn to the illustration of the banana and wonder if one day it will look like an antique. Stephen Benoit, the Calgene Fresh vice-president, appears and leads me into the employees' lunch area to talk. On the way in, he spots a newspaper article about the Flavr Savr pinned up on a bulletin board: it is illustrated with a drawing of a tomato strapped to an operating table with electrodes attached to it and a mad scientist about to throw the switch. Benoit looks pained. "I just wish they would stop using these dumb drawings," he says.

Benoit explains what the Flavr Savr is designed to do. "Our tomato will stay firm for seven to ten days longer than the average tomato. The way we've done that is we've isolated the gene that tells the tomato to get soft, made a copy of it, and inserted it *backwards*, using our proprietary Antisense technology. So instead of telling the tomato to get soft when it's ripe the Antisense gene tells it not to get soft. That will allow us to leave our tomato on the vine longer, and get more of the back-yard flavor into it, but still have a tomato that is firm enough to ship."

I am confused about whether Calgene is going to keep the tomato on the vine an extra seven to ten days, which would make it taste better, and therefore would benefit the consumer, or whether the seven to ten days will be added to the tomato's shelf life, which would benefit the seller. Benoit says that the tomato will spend about half the extra time on the vine. It will be picked at the "breaker stage," when it is just beginning to show color. "As you know, the great majority of tomatoes you buy in the supermarket are picked green, before all the sugars get into them," he says. "Then they're reddened, using ethylene gas. The industry has come up with the concept of the mature green tomato, which means a green tomato picked just before it shows color. The trouble is that the pickers, who work on a per-basket basis, don't have the time to tell the difference between a mature green and an immature green, and they pick a lot of tomatoes long before they're ripe. We won't pick any tomatoes before they show color—that way we'll know how ripe they are."

I ask how the Flavr Savr will be different from vine-ripened tomatoes, which are also picked at the breaker stage.

"The vine-ripes have only four to seven days of shelf life," Benoit says. "So the distributors have to refrigerate them, and that destroys the flavor. *Never* refrigerate a tomato. We won't have to refrigerate our tomato, because of the extended shelf life. And we will control our tomatoes from the grower to the supermarket to insure that they are never chilled."

I ask a few questions about Antisense, Calgene's patented method of manipulating the tomato's DNA, and Benoit suggests that we go find a plant scientist in the lab for a more detailed explanation. The lab is down the hall from the lunch area. Men and women in white lab coats are working at benches strewn with test-tube racks, dishes of agar, and microscopes. Steve Vanderpan, a young man wearing a lab coat and a ponytail, explains some of the details of Antisense. "The gene we're working with is the PG gene—for 'polygalacturonase.' PG is an enzyme that degrades pectin, a polymer in the walls of tomato cells. PG is there so that the tomato can get its seeds into the ground quickly. It would be extremely difficult, using sexual reproduction, to select for a non-PG-gene-bearing tomato. Our guys just cut the PG gene out, using restriction enzymes. Then we make up an Antisense gene. We attach a kanamycin-resistant gene to the Antisense gene as a marker, and we install this construct in the DNA of a disarmed agribacterium—the sort of thing that produces a crown gall on a tree. We expose tomato cells to the agribacterium, and it injects its DNA, which contains the Antisense gene, into the tomato DNA."

Vanderpan leads the way out the other end of the lab into a corridor with a series of tightly sealed doors, and opens a door marked "Tissue Culture Room Seven." We are bathed in pure-white grow lights. In metal racks below the lights are hundreds of petri dishes, each containing tomato cells, some already generated into plant tissue, resting in agar. Vanderpan says, "Now, remember the kanamycin gene we installed in our Antisense PG? Well, kanamycin is an antibiotic. If the Antisense-kanamycin construct is successfully implanted in the tomato plant's DNA, the antibiotic will fight off the bacteria in the petri dish, and the tomato cells will live. If not, they'll die."

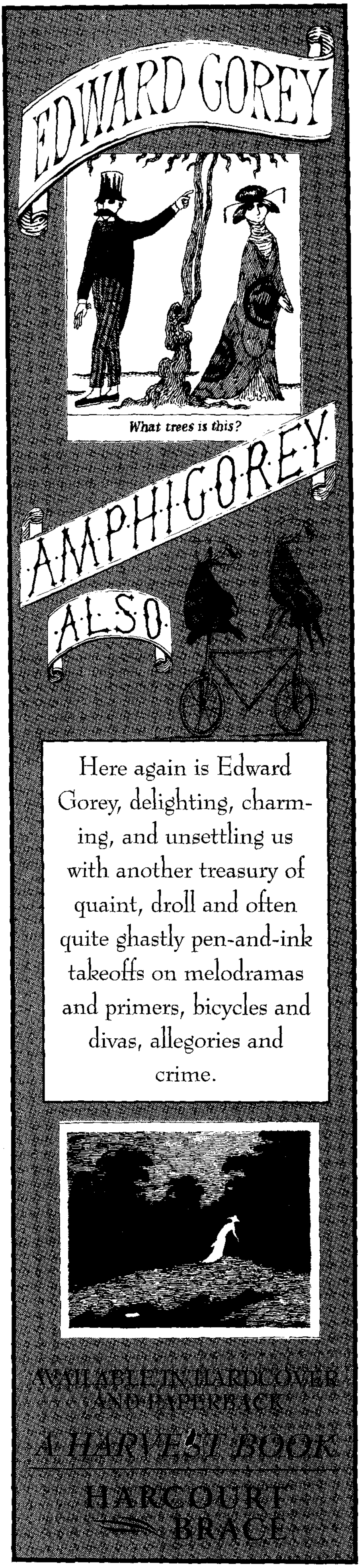
I ask, "So all these buds will grow into tomato plants?"

"Yes, but some of them we won't want," Vanderpan says. "We have no control over where the Antisense gene lines up on the genome."

I had not realized this. "Really?"

"Recombinant DNA doesn't give you that control—yet. Sometimes the gene is going to end up in the wrong place on the genome, which means that the tomato will probably develop into an undesirable mutant and we'll have to kill it. We may not know till we grow them out in the greenhouse."

The greenhouses are a quarter mile from the main building. Driving there, Benoit and I pass several tract-home developments, with no houses built yet—just big, forlorn, ugly stone walls standing in the middle of some tomato fields. Calgene's greenhouse manager, Karen McGuire, takes us into the thick hothouse heat. We stroll among great expanses of genetically engineered toma-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toes of all sizes and varieties. One plant is ten feet tall. McGuire fingers through some leaves and finds a small ripe tomato, picks it, and hands it to me. The color is beautiful, almost ruby. McGuire says, "See how ripe that is? But feel the firmness."

I squeeze the tomato. I toss it a few feet up in the air and catch it. I say, "So are you going to let me taste this thing?"

Benoit hesitates.

"Just one bite," I say.

McGuire says, "You might want to wash it first," carries it over to a faucet, runs water on it, and hands it to me.

In the eighteenth century, the tomato was widely believed to be poisonous, because it is a relative of nightshade, and to be diabolical, on account of its lurid color and the resemblance of its skin to human skin. A turning point in human-tomato relations came in 1820, when a man named Robert Gibbon Johnson sat on the steps of the courthouse in Salem, New Jersey, and, watched by a large crowd, ate two tomatoes. By a strange coincidence, I also come from Salem, New Jersey. In my home town, on a local holiday each August, a man in Colonial garb stands on the courthouse steps and raises a fresh South Jersey tomato to his mouth while spectators cry, "No! Don't do it!" I feel that the tomato I am holding is a transmitter connecting me to the real Robert Gibbon Johnson. I realize I am a little afraid of this tomato. I ask myself, "Do I want to do this?" Then I raise the tomato to my mouth.

If you live in a city but come from somewhere else, chances are that you have a perfect tomato somewhere in your past, which you picked from the vine when it was warm from the sun, and bit into like an apple, and will never forget, which actually tasted like a fruit, like a big grape, exploding juice into all parts of your mouth. But then you moved away from home and lost touch with the people you knew, and you left the backyard tomatoes behind. Your desire for a better tomato is in part the desire for the back yard you no longer have. There are people who say that through science the back yard can be restored to you, and there are other people who believe that placing your faith in science only carries you farther away from the back yard.

I take a bite of the tomato. Keeping in mind that it was a hothouse tomato, and that hothouse tomatoes are generally not as good as outdoor tomatoes, and that it was grown from a variety that might not be the variety I buy in the store, and that the circumstances of the tasting were unscientific, I have to say that the Flavr Savr was not the tomato of my dreams.

I WALK around Manhattan wearing a pin with the symbol of the Pure Food Campaign, Jeremy Rifkin's organization—the double helix with a red slash through it. Under the symbol are the words "I DO NOT Buy Genetically Engineered Food." On the subway, people furtively glance at the pin, squint uncomprehendingly, glance away. No one expresses solidarity with me. I wear the pin to a cocktail party on the Upper West Side. People seem angry with me. Sarah, a lawyer at a big Manhattan firm, says she is perfectly happy eating genetically engineered food and isn't going to stop just because it's suddenly fashionable not to. "I mean, what isn't genetically engineered? When you get right down to it?" she says. I wear the pin while I'm picking up an airline ticket in Rockefeller Center. A woman behind the ticket counter says, "You could drive yourself crazy thinking about this stuff. In church? On Sunday? When the guy next to me offers the sign of peace? I'm thinking, Now, where's his hand been? Because you don't know. Especially with the men. But I take it anyway, because what else are you going to do?"

I call people who are on record as having a problem with recombinant DNA in agriculture. Many of them recall similarly optimistic predictions being made by manufacturers of agricultural chemicals in the nineteen-forties, and think it is worth proceeding cautiously with recombinant DNA now to avoid the biotechnological equivalent of DDT. Shepherd Ogden, a Vermont seedsman and the publisher of The Cook's Garden seed catalogue, wonders why we need to prove that we can increase the production of corn when we already have an oversupply and are paying farmers not to produce corn. "A lot of us think that high tech is just not in the long run the way agriculture is going to go," he says. "When the petroleum runs out, and when water in California gets too expensive, the economic basis of a large part of our current agricultural system, where we grow something in California and truck it three thousand miles, will be marginalized. We've been high-tech-farming for fifty years, which is not a terrifically long time in human history. We've been farming organically for ten thousand years."

When I tell Margaret Mellon, a biotechnology expert at the National Wildlife Federation, about the guy from Mycogen who said that engineering a corn plant to produce Bt will do away with pesticides in corn farming in five years, she makes a derisive snorting sound into the phone. "That corn plant is going to express Bt in every one of its cells, so that not just rootworm but anything that chews on it gets the Bt. Bt is a safe, biodegradable pesticide. In anywhere from five to ten years, pests will evolve that are resistant to Bt, and that will be the end of a perfectly good pesticide, and we may have to start using even more chemicals on rootworm. And what happens when Bt spreads into trees and grass and the butterflies and moths start chewing on it?"

I go to see Rebecca Goldburg, a scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund, on Park Avenue. Some of the work she does concerns herbicide-tolerant plants. She tells me that the French chemical company Rhône-Poulenc funded Calgene's development of a cotton plant that tolerates bromoxynil, a herbicide manufactured by Rhône-Poulenc. At present, farmers can use only limited amounts of bromoxynil without killing their cotton. Rhône-Poulenc hopes that Calgene's cotton plants will allow the farmer to use much more bromoxynil, which would be good for the farmer, because it would increase yield, and good for Calgene, which would be selling the technology, and good for Rhône-Poulenc, which is already selling the bromoxynil. The public would also benefit, according to the industry, because supposedly bromoxynil is less toxic than some other herbicides, although, Goldburg points out, it is toxic enough to cause cancer in rats and to make the Environmental Protection Agency require that workers who apply it wear protective suits.

I say, "That doesn't sound like

the road to chemical-free agriculture."

Goldburg studies me for a while. "No, it doesn't," she says.

Goldburg says there are two big questions that consumers should ask: "Will the use of antibiotics like kanamycin induce antibiotic tolerance, especially in children?" and "Will DNA taken from an allergenic food, like a peanut, make the host food allergenic, too?" She says that the chance that either event will happen is low. Then she says, "I think a lot of people just don't feel right in their gut about recombinant DNA in agriculture—they feel on some level it's not right to mix plant and animal genes. But, unfortunately, health concerns are the only mechanism available to them to express their doubts. We have to talk about whether these products are safe, not whether they are necessary or desirable."

I have lunch with an old college friend, Wilson Kidde, who is now the president of International Agritech Resources, an agricultural technology-information service, and who is the nearest thing I can find to an objective source. I point out to him that Kraft, General Foods, Kellogg, Beatrice, and Nabisco, which are among the largest food companies in the United States, have relatively small investments in recombinant DNA, and that the leaders in the field are Du Pont, Upjohn, Bayer, Dow, Monsanto, Ciba-Geigy, and Rhône-Poulenc—companies with the research budgets, staff, and facilities to do advanced rDNA work. I say it seems to me that the drug and chemical companies, whose own market in pesticides is being threatened by companies like Mycogen, are using recombinant DNA as a wedge to get into the food business, and that if they are successful the companies that supply us with aspirin and weed killer may one day supply our produce, meat, and dairy.

Wilson says, "Well, it's a value-added evolution. Adding value to food, whether you do it by preserving it or cooking it or packaging it, or all three at once, as in the case of Swanson TV dinners, is the usual way a company gets into the food business. Kellogg adds value to corn by turning it into cornflakes. Recombinant DNA is just a new way of adding value to food, but doing it earlier in the production chain, as it were—at the level of DNA, before the food companies can get their hands on it."

Campbell Soup is one of the few traditional food companies that invested early in rDNA. Campbell has put millions of dollars into Calgene, and it owns the patent on the PG gene. In trying to exploit its investment, however, Campbell has been handicapped in a way that Du Pont, say, has not. In December, Campbell received a letter from Jeremy Rifkin threatening to boycott the company unless Campbell dissociated itself from genetically engineered products. In January, in a letter to the *Times*, James Moran, the director of public relations at Campbell, said, "Campbell does not market any bioengineered products and has no plans to do so. . . . Before any such use would even be contemplated, we would have to be assured that such use has full governmental approval and strong consumer acceptance." The impression many observers got from this sequence of letters was that Campbell was so worried for fear the stigma of rDNA would damage its reputation for wholesomeness that it immediately gave in to Rifkin's demands.

I ask Wilson, "Do you really think Campbell's reputation *could* be hurt by using recombinant DNA?"

Wilson says, "Well, the very fact that Campbell even has to worry about it puts the company at a disadvantage. I mean, a manufacturer of pesticides doesn't have to worry so much about its reputation for wholesomeness."

When Roger Salquist took his tomato to the Food and Drug Administration, in 1991, the agency did not have a policy on genetically engineered foods. The decision that the F.D.A. had to make came down to this: Is foreign DNA a food additive, in which case a genetically engineered tomato is a processed food and requires a label, like a can of tomato soup, or is recombinant DNA simply an extension of classical plant breeding, in which case the genetically engineered tomato is a whole food, like a tangerine or seedless grapes, and requires no label? Salquist argued that his tomato should be regulated and sold like any other tomato, without a label. Many people in the industry felt that to label a genetically engineered vegetable "Genetically Engi-

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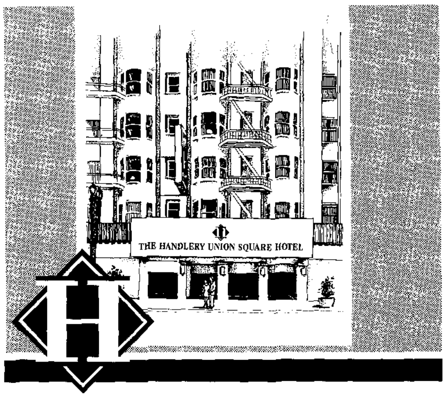
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neered” would hurt sales, and that submitting a food-additive petition, which is a long and expensive undertaking, would be a difficult burden for small companies like Calgene to bear.

The F.D.A.’s decision, announced in May, 1992, was that DNA from another organism is not a food additive, and that the use of recombinant DNA is in no regulatory sense different from classical plant breeding. If the donor organism is a known allergen, the F.D.A. will require the manufacturer to do additional testing, but the mere fact that the donor is a peanut, a pig, or a human being will not require a label. It was the policy that Salquist and the industry had asked for. Unfortunately, it was announced by Vice-President Dan Quayle. Quayle’s Council on Competitiveness had taken a special interest in the matter, and in his speech Quayle welcomed the policy, saying that it would provide regulatory relief for the biotech industry. “That was the dumbest thing Quayle could have done, because it allowed the environmental groups to raise the food-safety issue,” Salquist told me. In an effort to restore his tomato’s reputation, Salquist decided to go back to the F.D.A. and request that the marker gene be considered a food additive—in effect, to ask for the very regulation he had argued against. Now Vice-President Al Gore is working with the F.D.A. to determine whether the 1992 policy on genetically engineered foods needs to be revised.

From Calgene’s point of view, the worst thing about the F.D.A.’s policy was the inspiration it gave to Jeremy Rifkin. When you read one of Rifkin’s jeremiads, or see Rikfin on a consumer-affairs segment of the evening news, you get the impression that he is a zealot. In person, however, Rifkin is pleasant and charmingly self-deprecating. With his shirtsleeves rolled up, his tie loosened, and a smile that makes his eyes crinkle at the corners, Rifkin seems more like a lobbyist than an activist. This is the Rifkin of “Life in the Third Millennium,” a one-day interdisciplinary seminar he offers to colleges and other organizations around the country, for five thousand dollars a pop plus expenses.

In his Washington office, on Seventeenth Street Northwest, Rifkin has two walls of books—one with all his intellectual influences, who include Mumford, Roszak, Marcuse, Rank, Jung, and Reich, and the other with various editions of Rifkin’s own books, which include “Algeny,” “Beyond Beef,” “Biosphere Politics,” and “Declaration of a Heretic.” The books form a right angle; you enter through a doorway at the point of the angle. I passed through the doorway and took a seat. Rifkin came around from behind his desk and sat near me, looking into my eyes. I said that in my reporting I had been impressed by the speed and urgency with which intellectual property was being acquired by biotech companies. If a company comes up with a plausible use for a particular gene, it can obtain a patent that covers not only that use but also the gene itself. For example, Calgene’s tomato is covered by two trademarks and two patents, including a patent on the Antisense method and, most important, a patent on the gene that causes pectin breakdown in the cell walls of the tomato. Therefore, even if the Flavr Savr doesn’t work, Calgene (or Campbell) can demand a royalty from anyone else who uses the PG gene. The situation bore the marks of a landgrab, I said.

Rifkin leaned toward me and rested his forearms on his knees, and said, “What we’re seeing here is the conversion of DNA into a commodity, and it is in some ways the ideal corporate commodity—it’s small, it’s ownable, it’s easily transportable, and it lasts forever.” A swift, allusive elaboration of that point followed. Then came a metaphor: “Genetic engineering is the final enclosure movement. It is the culmination of the enclosure of the village commons that began five hundred years ago. As we have developed as a society and we have moved from an agricultural to a pyrochemical to a biotechnical culture”—three sorting movements with his hands mark these cultures—“we have seen that whoever controls the

“I think we’re getting serious—she’s springing for a credit check and *a surveillance on me.”*

land or the fossil fuels or, now, the DNA controls society. Control the gene pool and you control life!"

Rifkin's argument against genetically engineered food is composed of four different arguments—the safety argument, the ethical argument, the anti-corporate argument, and the sustainable-agriculture argument—loaded into alternating chambers and fired so rapidly that the rounds are hard to distinguish from one another. His unique talent is to locate the metaphor that draws the disparate parts of his argument together and gives conjecture the force and solidity of fact. The thing about Rifkin that drives people in the biotechnology industry crazy is that they cannot understand why he is against them—he seems to be motivated neither by high principle nor greed. The obvious great pleasure he gets from encapsulating four hundred years of thought in five minutes, bundling it all up attractively, and delivering it to an audience must be, as far as I can figure, its own reward.

Rifkin floats more or less by himself in the galaxy of green politics, having had no long-term alliances with major environmental organizations. The environmentalists I know regard Rifkin as somewhat outlandish but savor him as a kind of guilty pleasure, since few people are better than Rifkin at getting under a corporation's skin. And the idea of Rifkin has many defenders. Even people in the biotech industry will concede that Rifkin provokes debate and that in the long run debate is good, because it is the only way the public's apprehension about recombinant DNA will go away.

I asked Rifkin whether he thought that Calgene's tomato was safe. He leaned forward again, lowered his voice confidingly, and said that Calgene's tomato probably is safe. Then he gave me an argument. "The tomato is the classic example of the old way of thinking: whatever increases productivity is good and will find a market," he said. "I call it World's Fair thinking. But now we have a new way of thinking. What we will see in food in the nineties is going to be a battle between the World's Fair view of the world and the new, ecologically based stewardship of the world. Food is an intimate issue. I'm telling you food is going to be the focus of all green-oriented politics. And this is only going to gather momentum—in a year, this movement is going to be so strong that no genetically engineered product will make it to the supermarket. I think Calgene has miscalculated in the most profound way. It spent an enormous amount of money and it never asked the simplest question: Do people want this tomato? And I say people don't want this tomato. The bottom line is, who needs it?"

JAY TAYLOR, a Florida tomato grower who will be growing the Flavr Savr, told me a story to illustrate how the tomato business works. "A few years back, I sold a guy six loads of tomatoes in Virginia on August 12th," he said. A load is a full semitrailer. "On September 17th, I was up in Detroit and I ran into the guy I sold those tomatoes to. I said, 'Hey, did you sell those tomatoes?' He said, 'Nope. I still got 'em.' He had those six loads of tomatoes in his coolers—he was waiting for the price to go up, so he could make a profit. You know who he ended up selling 'em to? McDonald's."

This is the main reason that supermarket tomatoes taste bad. Tomato distributors, in essence, run a futures market. The longer the shelf life of a tomato, the greater the probability that all the people who speculate on tomatoes—salesmen, repackers, warehousers, and retailers—can sell them for more than they bought them for. The wholesale market is very large, and a lot of money is involved; the price of a twenty-five-pound box of tomatoes can move from six dollars to eighteen dollars in ten days. Interests are entrenched. When I asked Calgene Fresh's Tom Churchwell how he was going to cope with this problem, he said, "We've changed the way the tomatoes are picked and the way the pickers are paid, we've changed the packing materials, we've invented our own packing machine, which will treat the tomatoes much more gently, and we're going to ship our tomatoes in good air-ride trailers, using truckers who are paid for the quality of what they deliver, not just the bulk, and we'll repack the tomatoes ourselves in our new service center outside Chicago."

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name on it. And if you can brand your tomatoes you can charge a premium for them, and that allows you to pay for the other stuff." (Calgene plans to charge around three dollars a pound for its tomatoes.)

In Florida, most of the people I talked to felt that compared with reforming the tomato business genetic engineering is easy. In Homestead, which is in one of the state's major tomato-growing regions, I talked about this with a tomato salesman named Ed Angrisani. Tomato salesmen enjoy a mythic status within the tomato business. They control dozens of truckloads of tomatoes a day, and they can earn more than a million dollars a year. Angrisani is a powerful-looking man, and he wears a gold necklace, a big gold ring, and a fabulous gold Rolex watch. I had previously met three tomato growers, and all of them wore gold Rolex watches, but Angrisani's was the biggest.

Angrisani's office had been wrecked six months earlier by Hurricane Andrew, and it had new doors, which made the air fragrant with oak. He was on the phone selling tomatoes when I came in. On his desk were invoices for loads to Vancouver, Los Angeles, Louisville, Hunts Point Market, in the Bronx, and other destinations—his morning's work. When he got off the phone, I said that it seemed to me that when people at Calgene talked about reforming the tomato business they were talking about reforming people like Angrisani himself, and did Angrisani feel threatened by that?

Angrisani didn't look threatened. He smiled and put his hands behind his head and leaned back in his chair. "I personally would like to see Calgene succeed," he said. "Maybe Calgene's tomatoes will sell themselves, and I hope they do. Or it might be that they'll need a guy like me to sell their tomatoes for them. I mean, if it were just a matter of sitting here waiting for the phone to ring, growers wouldn't need guys like me. What separates the men from the boys in this business is whether you can sell your tomatoes when nobody wants them, when you've got a whole field that's just going to rot out there"—he waved toward the window—"unless you can move 'em out."

Angrisani scratched the side of his face for a while. Then he said, "I've got customers who know that when the supply is tight they can call me and I'll sell 'em a load. So when I get oversupplied I can call them and say, 'Hey, I know you don't need it, but how about buying a load?' And they'll say, 'We'll send the truck.' It took me sixteen years to get to where I had the relationships to do that. Now, maybe the folks at Calgene think they can come in and do it overnight—and, like I say, I wish 'em the best—but it's not a simple deal."

The phone rang. Angrisani said into it, "Make sure we get eight dollars a box. He owes us one dollar."

As I was leaving, I asked Angrisani for a card. He said, "I don't have any cards. They were all washed away in the hurricane." I drove through Homestead on the way back to Miami. Roads were lined with chainsawed sections of avocado and lime trees, and there were rotting piles of furniture and appliances on almost every street corner. All the street signs were uprooted and had concrete clinging to the bottom of the poles like hunks of sod. Tomatoes were just about the only living thing I saw. Tomatoes were everywhere, thriving.

A CENTURY ago, in June, 1893, Luther Burbank began publishing his catalogue "New Creations in Fruit and Flowers." Burbank was already celebrated for creating the Burbank potato, whose resistance to disease was far superior to that of existing potatoes. But with "New Creations," which introduced to the world his hybrid plums and prunes, Burbank's celebrity climbed almost to the level of Edison's. In newspapers he was portrayed as a saint. Edward Wickson, a professor of horticulture at the University of California, wrote at the turn of the century, when Burbank was at the height of his fame, "He could hear the 'still small voice' without preparatory earthquake or whirlwind. Like David of old he could do his work with smooth pebbles from the brook; and he cast aside the elaborate armament of his scientific brethren lest it should impede his movements."

That kind of plant breeder, who was as much an artist as a scientist, and who, working within prescribed limits of nature, performed miracles, will probably disappear with the coming [illegible] recombinant DNA. While I was in Davis for my tour of Calgene, I went to see one of the last of the heroic master breeders, Dr. Charles M. Rick. That the tomatoes you are growing this year don't die of blight or yield unevenly or grow too leafy is ultimately attributable to Dr. Rick's efforts. Since the nineteen-forties, Dr. Rick has been prospecting along the slopes of the Andes, the cradle of *Lycopersicon*, for novel tomato plants. He discovered a new species of tomato, *Solanum rickii*, bringing the total of known related wild tomato species to eleven. The specimens he has collected form the bulk of the C. M. Rick Tomato Genetics Resource Center, the largest collection of wild tomato species and genetic stock in the world. The center is on the Davis campus, across town from Calgene. It is the New York Public Library of tomato seeds. On the walls of the center are pictures of amazing tomato plants from around the world—a tomato plant growing on a sandy beach in the Galápagos, a tomato growing at thirty-six hundred metres in Chile, a tomato growing in the Chilean desert, a tomato tree in northern Ecuador standing twenty-five feet high.

Dr. Rick is seventy-eight years old. He has a somewhat scraggly white beard, and long white wisps of hair curl out from under the faded khaki hat he often wears. In his shirt pocket he carries tweezers for emasculating tomato anthers and a probe for pollinating tomato stigmas. His dealings with tomatoes go back to a quasi-mystical experience he had in a tomato field in the early forties. "I was working in genetics at U.C. Davis, and a professor said, 'Charlie, why don't you go out to that field and see what causes those tomato plants to be unfruitful.' The guy was a cantankerous old fellow, and I thought, Oh, man, he would think of something like that.

A month later, I woke up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat and said to myself, 'Rick! You damn fool! You'd better get out there and see those tomatoes!' So I spent the day in that tomato field, and by the time I came back I was hooked on tomatoes, absolutely hooked."

I was interested in knowing what Rick thought of Calgene's tomato. He laughed, and said, "I'll wait till I taste it."

I asked, "Well, do you think it's possible to produce a back-yard supermarket tomato?"

Rick thought for a while, then said, "Well, it is important to keep in mind that, while we have become quite skilled at recombinant DNA, we still don't really know how genes work, and the more we find out about genes the less simple their behavior appears to be." He laughed again and scratched his head through his old hat. "I mean, even something like the tomato, which has only a thousand or so genes, and a genome that has been extensively mapped—well, tomatoes are damn tricky things. There are so many things that can go wrong when you breed a tomato—yield, maturation time, quality, uniformity, coloration, size. One little cat face or growth crack and people won't buy the damn thing. Now, color is relatively easy. It's not hard to breed a tomato that looks great and tastes like hell." He laughed. "I'm not entirely convinced that recombinant DNA will do any more for supermarket tomatoes than classical breeding has done. A few years back, the Israelis made a lot of noise saying that they had suppressed the same gene Calgene had, using conventional methods—only, they called theirs the RIN gene. Said they suppressed it with a gene they got out of a wild cherry."

I spotted what appeared to be some ancient rolls of toilet paper high on a row of cluttered shelves. "What's that?" I asked, pointing.

"South American t.p. The aboriginal stuff," Rick said. He told me to reach up and get a roll. It was yellow with age and looked as if it would do fine for finishing carpentry work. "Recombinant DNA can't hold a candle to this invention," Dr. Rick said. "Feel the consistency of that stuff?" He rubbed a sheet between his fingers. "Much better than American toilet paper for wrapping tomato specimens in." ◆

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

TO THE POTTER'S FIELD

Who are New York's unclaimed dead? Of the seventy-four thousand deaths that occur in the city each year, some of the most haunting involve the more than three thousand unknown or indigent people who are laid to rest in the communal graves of Potter's Field.

BY EDWARD CONLON

> This word came to Jeremiah from the Lord: Rise up, be off to the potter's house; there I will give you my message. I went down to the potter's house and there he was, working at the wheel. Whenever the object of clay which he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again, making of the clay another object of whatever sort he pleased. Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do to you, house of Israel, as this potter has done? Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, house of Israel.
>
> —*Jeremiah 18:1-6.*

DEATH comes to one in a hundred New Yorkers each year. The rate is a little higher here than the national average, which is nine in a thousand. In 1990, natural causes—a designation that includes all forms of illness, from cancer to exposure—accounted for ninety-three per cent of the deaths in New York, or 69,049; homicides for 2,272; accidents for 1,908; suicides for 646. Nationally, the order of the last three categories is different: accidents, suicides, then homicides. Whether you rejoice that fewer New Yorkers die by accident than by intention is one of the finer tests for optimism yet devised. The suicide rate, however, is plainly welcome news, and something of a puzzle. At nine in a hundred thousand, it is significantly below the national average.

Most New Yorkers are spoken for when they die: there is someone to hire an undertaker, to call friends, family, and clergy together to remember the life and observe the body's passage to mausoleum, grave, or urn. But many who die here are strangers to the city: the homeless, luckless, transient, and alone—people without friendships or connections, who cannot inspire memories after death, because they escaped notice when they were alive. Each year, approximately three thousand New Yorkers die unidentified, or without leaving information on next of kin. Their relatives may live in another country, or they may be unable, financially or emotionally, to lay claim to the body. In Manhattan, these dead are zippered into rubberized canvas bags and delivered by truck, with appropriate paperwork, to a morgue near Bellevue Hospital, on First Avenue and Thirtieth Street. In the lobby of that building, there is an inscription, in steel block capitals on rich brown marble, that reads, "TACEANT COLLOQUIA. EFFUGIAT RISUS. HIC LOCUS EST UBI MORS GAUDET SUCCURRERE VITAE." It means "Let conversation cease. Laughter, take flight. This place is where death delights to aid the living."

The Chief Medical Examiner, whose office is above the morgue at Bellevue, has jurisdiction over all unusual, suspicious, or unexpected deaths and over all unidentified bodies, whether or not the cause of death is known. There are five county morgues, and a deputy medical examiner is assigned to each of them: Bellevue; Kings County; Queens General; Jacobi Hospital, in the Bronx; and Seaview Hospital, on Staten Island—but a fire six years ago in the Staten Island morgue has caused that borough's dead to be taken, for now, to Brooklyn. When there is an overflow in any of the morgues, the bodies are kept in refrigerated trucks. Just under half of the seventy-four thousand deaths in the city are referred to one or another of the medical examiners' offices annually, and almost sixteen thousand bodies are examined. Autopsies are performed on about half of those.

When an unidentified body is discovered, the police or paramedics ordinarily call the medical examiner. If the body is not decomposed and the cause of death is natural, the body goes to the morgue. If it is decomposed, or if there are signs of trauma, an investigator from the medical examiner's office is sent for, and the body is examined. The police then attempt to notify the next of kin. If there are none or if they do not claim the body, the morgue will hold the body for two weeks before shipping it to New York's Potter's Field for "city burial," as the procedure is officially, if only occasionally, known. At its discretion, the M.E.'s office can hold a body indefinitely: Baby Hope, a five- or six-year-old girl who had been sexually abused, asphyxiated, and left in a cooler beside the George Washington Bridge in July of 1991, is still being held as investigation of the case continues.

Over three thousand bodies are buried each year in Potter's Field, which is on Hart Island, in the Bronx. Few cities take as much time and trouble to identify their dead as New York does, and most cities prefer cremation to traditional burial. After the riots in Washington Heights in July, 1992, the city arranged to fly the body of José García, a drug dealer killed by the police, to Santo Domingo for burial, and defended the expenditure by pointing out that the city pays for more than six thousand burials a year. This figure apparently represents the interments in Potter's Field and also burial grants awarded to poor families by the city's Human Resources Administration. There were 4,891 of these in 1992, at an average of eight hundred and fifty dollars each. The Crime Victims Board, a state agency, also pays for around a thousand funerals per year, three-quarters of which are for city residents.

The lobby of the Chief Medical Examiner's office is decorated with black-and-white photographic prints of Manhattan: the Woolworth Building, Grand Central Station, the Public Library, City Hall. There are couches and low tables, with ashtrays and boxes of tissues, and when I was there recently someone had left behind some devotional literature from the St. Jude Society. Jude is the patron saint of lost causes.

Ellen Borakove is the director of public affairs for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of the City of New York. She is practiced in talking about disaster, and has an air of kindness, competence, and invulnerability to surprise. Not long ago, Ms. Borakove showed me the interview room, which adjoins the lobby. Here families of the deceased are asked to identify the body and to provide information about illnesses and other medical history, in order to expedite the body's release from city custody.

"We used to do the I.D.s downstairs, in the morgue, and it was terrible," Ms. Borakove said. "We don't have makeup and things. Recently we got clearance to use Polaroid photos, and now we shoot the head, or enough to show it without any gross disfiguration. The M.E. has to determine the cause and the manner of death of a body, but the body is the property of the family. It's up to them what happens. In some religions, Jewish and Muslim, someone has to stay with the body, and small rooms are available to accommodate those people."

One such room is adjacent to the interview room—a narrow alcove like a miniature theatre, with a couch facing a coffin-shaped interior window. Behind the window are the steel doors of an elevator, which brings bodies up from the morgue below. The body is viewed like a museum exhibit, behind glass, and a kind of wake can be held. Families take advantage of this arrangement mostly if there is to be a foreign burial.

"Sometimes there are certain religious prohibitions against an autopsy," Ms. Borakove said. "The family then has forty-eight hours to get a judge to sign an order forbidding it, but to my knowledge that's never been done. We take great care to preserve the integrity of bodily fluids—put plastic sheets inside the autopsy table, so nothing drains away. We always use the least invasive manner in determining cause of death. And only the family is entitled to the autopsy report and medical records.

"Say a body's found in a plastic bag in a lot. Fingerprints are taken and sent to the Missing Persons Squad, and then there are body and dental X-rays, and dental charts are drawn up. The investigators have a very good rate of identification—they miss maybe two in ten. The M.E.'s office employs many dentists, two anthropologists, and a radiologist—all on a consulting basis. A broken arm or rib might turn up on a medical history. We might have an anthropologist take a look—see what he or she has to say. We could have facial reconstructions done by police artists. Nothing is one-hundred-per-cent sure. We're talking about a reasonable degree of certainty, which is a lot of work.

"Results may not come back for almost a year if the fingerprints circulate into the federal system. Any time there's a construction site they're digging up—especially downtown—you can expect something to turn up. Just recently, we got a little baby in Brooklyn that was fairly well skeletonized. And there are bones and body parts that have ceremonial and religious uses—in *santería*, especially—and anthropologists look at anything the cops think might be human remains. We get a fair number of things that aren't. The cops just brought in a box of bones from the Bronx that turned out to be pig bones."

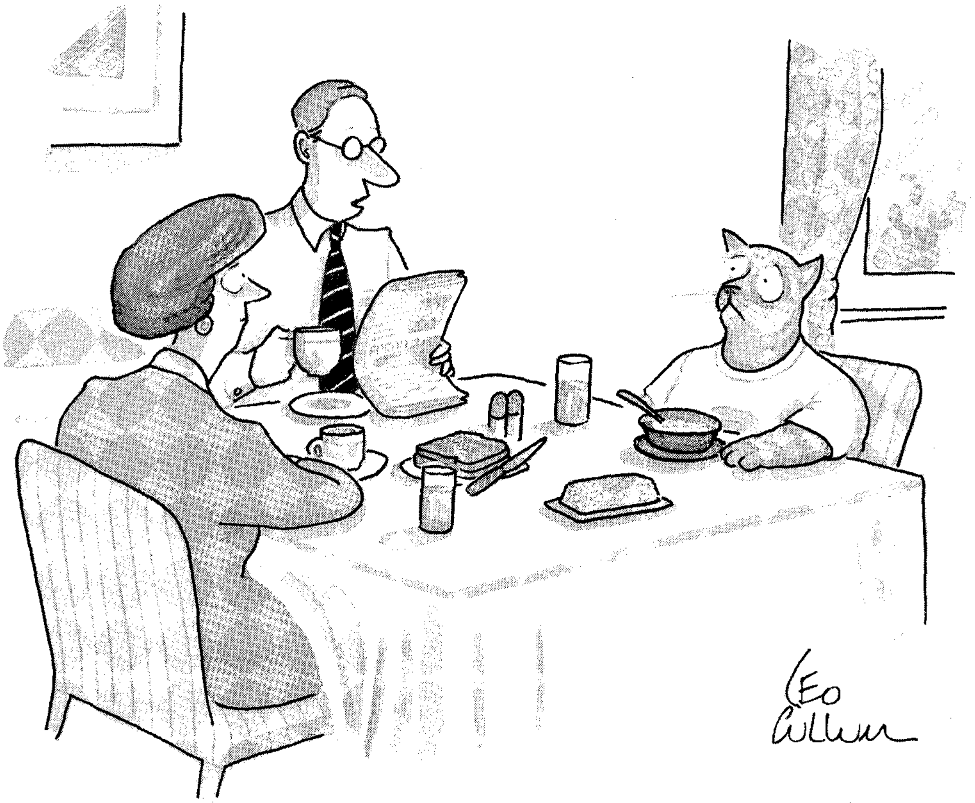
We take the elevator down to the basement to visit the morgue. A concrete hall leads to a central refrigerator containing a hundred and twenty-six drawers. A red digital readout flickers as the temperature rises and falls: thirty-five degrees, thirty-six, thirty-five. The walls are tiled in swimming-pool blue, and dim grids of fluorescent lights hang from the ceiling. Inside the drawers, the bodies lie on well-worn and dented stainless-steel trays, which slide out and can be lifted onto gurneys for transport and weighing. Opposite the refrigerator are rooms for X-rays and anthropological study, and vaults painted with a pyramidal poinsettia-red logo that warns "BIOHAZARD." Some bodies are kept in the vaults, which bring the maximum storage space to a hundred and seventy-five.

"A fair number of the spaces are filled," Ms. Borakove says. "Maybe we're at sixty- to seventy-per-cent capacity."

Half a dozen plain pine coffins, ranging from doll-size to giant-size, are stacked haphazardly on the floor. One is seven feet long, almost two feet wide, and more than two feet deep. "That's a pretty big one," she says, with a shrug.

The autopsy room, which is next door, is as ample as the morgue—perhaps thirty feet by sixty—and suggests an industrial kitchen as much as it does an operating room. Mason jars and plastic-ware containers line the shelves and fill the counters. On the tables, great steel pots, scissors, ladles, and serrated knives are as plentiful as scalpels, forceps, and syringes. There are handsaws and striker saws (a striker saw is an electric drill with a toothed steel disk attached to the chuck), for cutting through bone; there are sinks, refrigerators, and X-ray boxes; packets of slides for histological analysis; containers for tissue samples. A paper bucket of the kind that fast-food chicken is served in contains plastic jars for snippets of organs and samples of fluids. Labels and tags have space for a name, date, case number, and three columns of small boxes to be checked, designating such items as "Brain," "Liver," "Kidney"; "Urine," "Blood," "Bile," and "Other"; and "Homicide," "Motor Vehicle," and "Contagious." Because of the possibility of contagion, the pathologist works in

ALICIA CZECHOWSKI



"If you must know, Jimmy, you came from a box in front of the market. It said 'Free Kittens.' "

two pairs of latex gloves under a pair made of steel mesh.

The center of the room holds eight autopsy tables. Each table is essentially a shallow, rectangular stainless-steel sink, almost four feet wide and more than eight feet long. Removable sections of steel mesh support the body, and the head and shoulders rest on a perforated steel sheet. The head is propped up by a grooved wooden block, dark with use, and smooth from many scrubbings. The sink, which drains at the foot end, is equipped with hot- and cold-water taps, hoses, and a scale suspended overhead for weighing various organs. Another hose feeds through a helmet-like guard, to prevent splashing, and is used for washing organs that have been laid on the mesh.

Are eight tables enough? Is there ever a rush?

"Sure there's a rush! They want a wake, they want a funeral, sometimes they order an autopsy done the next day. We do it within twenty-four to forty-eight hours, and try to keep it closer to twenty-four. We're here to serve the families of the people who died."

The morgue is currently undergoing renovation, its first since 1959. The renovation will include the installation of a DNA laboratory on a site once occupied by the Morgue Museum, which from 1960 to 1990 was open to police and firefighter cadets and to medical students. Among the highlights of the museum's collection were a meat grinder used to dispose of maternal casualties at an illegal-abortion mill; varieties of nonviable Siamese twins, in formaldehyde; and a ten-pound human liver. There were also knives, scissors, pens, a bow and arrow, ropes, pipes, baseball bats, fans, and extension cords—all collected at the scenes of homicides. A mannequin wore shreds of clothing from the body of a person who had been struck by lightning in Central Park. A homemade gallows and a self-surgery kit, consisting of a shaving mirror, a lamp, and a knife, were relics of bygone suicides. Other remains from self-inflicted deaths included a charred hand clasping a gun, and the tibia, protruding through the sole of a shoe, of a man who jumped from a forty-third-story window. In 1990, the exhibits—there were twenty-one hundred of them—were sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington.

"It's hard to say what's strange and what isn't around here," Ms. Borakove says. "It's a matter of perspective. What gets to me most is the children who die from abuse. Everyone here will tell you the same. The autopsy tables, a baby—a little child on that big table. It makes an indelible image."

> Thus said the Lord: Go, buy a potter's earthen flask. Take along some of the elders of the people and of the priests, and go out to the Valley of Benhinnom, at the entrance of the Potsherd Gate; there proclaim the words which I will speak to you: Listen to the word of the Lord, kings of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to bring such evil upon this place that all who hear of it will feel their ears tingle.
>
> —*Jeremiah 19:1-3.*

"IF there's no fingerprints and no face, that's where I come in," Peggy Caldwell told me. She has been a consulting forensic anthropologist at the Chief Medical Examiner's office for ten years. She also is an adjunct professor of anthropology at William Paterson College, teaches first-, second-, third-, and seventh-grade science at St. Bernard's School in Manhattan, and is a Ph.D. candidate at Rutgers. "All the cases are interesting—every one of them is," she said. "It sounds trite but it's not just 'Oh dear, another foot.' I look at each one of them as a puzzle that needs solving—deserves it."

She is youthful, buoyant, with short blond hair, and she was wearing a T-shirt and shorts. She told me that later that day she was to consult for the television show "Law & Order," to explain how police artists do facial reconstructions.

"There are steps you take, no matter whether you're dealing with an isolated body part or bone or with a complete skeleton," she says. "First, archeology, or scene search—where the material comes from. You get that information from two sources: the police and the medical investigator, the 'tour doctor' on call. They describe the scene, the temperature, whether there's any ground cover, how deep the body's buried. They take photographs, and so on. You have to maintain the chain of evidence, protect the integrity of the findings, because everything has the potential of winding up in court. Most of my cases come from abandoned buildings, vacant lots, and the water. A lot are waterborne—you have to remember that New York is a city of fourteen islands. Others come from subway tunnels, railroad tracks, and dumpsters.

"The next thing to find out is, 'Is it human?' Roughly twenty-five per cent of the remains I'd see used to be nonhuman—fifty to sixty cases a year—but the percentage is lower now, because medical investigators are trained to eliminate those cases. Most of the nonhuman stuff is food—chicken, beef, turkey, pork—but occasionally something interesting turns up, like a bear paw found in Queens. That was tricky, because there's a strong architectural resemblance between bear paws and human hands—there's a mammalian evolutionary link. Things like this are described and then discarded, put in the incinerator. Sorry about that, but it's so they don't come back.

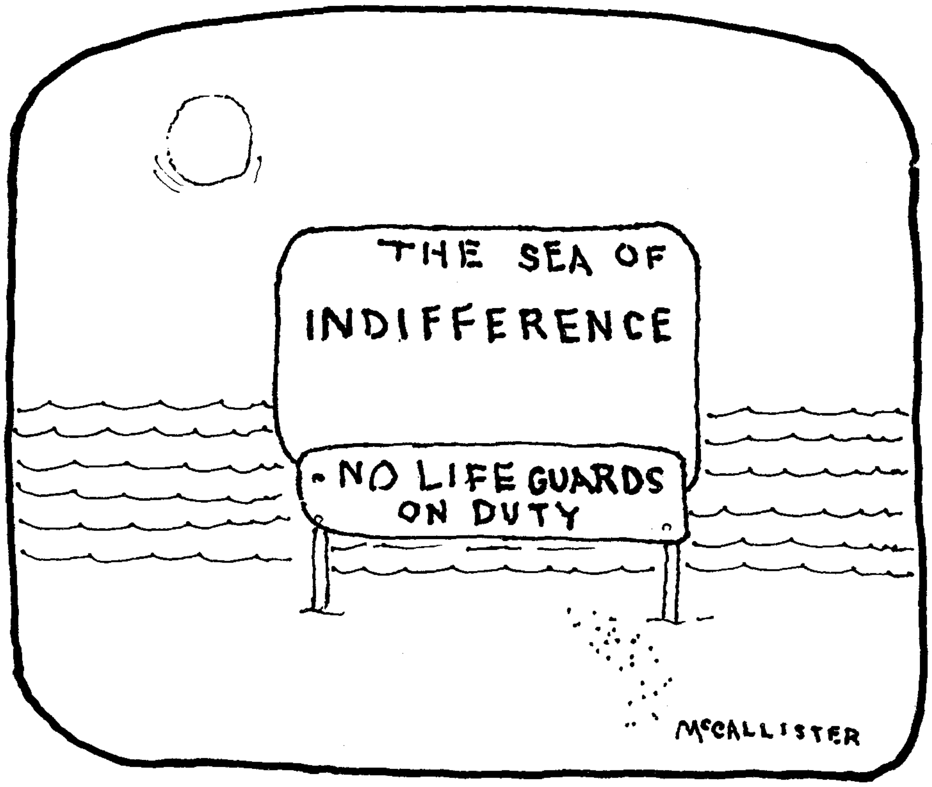
"Then there's preservation, conservation, and maceration. Preservation has to do with the state of the remains at first sight. If there's soft tissue, is it mummified or sun-bleached or broken, or goodness knows what? Conservation is what I do. If I glue or wash something or make any other alterations, it has to be accounted for, by law. Maceration is the removal of soft tissue. We usually don't macerate a whole person. It's too much time and work. Then harvesting. It sounds rather crass, but I take out the pieces I want or need. 'Need'—I mean, I don't *want* any of it! But I harvest pieces to answer questions about age, sex, and stature. Usually some long bone, or the medial clavicle for age, the pubic synthesis for age and sex, the sternal end of the fourth rib—a nice esoteric site, which is a good age indicator—or the iliac crest. Sometimes there's a little dissection with the striker saws, which look real mean, especially if there's blood all over 'em. Usually, I have the mortuary assistant handle that. We soak the bone in water for a month, then boil it in water at a very high temperature for five minutes. The soft tissue just pops right off, and we get nice clean bones to work with.

"Another step is to establish the time since death, or T.S.D. This is very important for the police. The missing-persons list for New York City would fill this room, and it's computerized. If I can narrow the time down—if I get lucky with some soft tissue or clothing—then I can usually establish the T.S.D. within a matter of years. From five to ten, five to seven, more than fifty. The longer you're dead, the vaguer the estimate. They've tried to establish a data base for the whole Northeast, but it hasn't really worked out. You have hot summers and cold winters from Maine to New York, but New York City is ten degrees warmer than its surroundings, and anyway the immediate environment can do weirder things than the climate. I'm talking about elevator shafts and refrigerators. There are no hard-and-fast rules, but if I can get the T.S.D. within two years the cops have a shot."

The determination of sex, age, race, and stature is the first and most elementary objective of forensic anthropology, Ms. Caldwell explained. The morphology, or shape, of the bones is studied, and exhaustive measurements—more than four hundred for a complete skeleton—are taken, and analyzed by a statistical technique called discriminate function. Stature, the least difficult to assess, is estimated by calculation from the length of the long bones, usually of the leg, using a formula that was discovered during an examination of Korean War casualties. Estimating stature is easier than determining sex, particularly in the case of prepubescents.

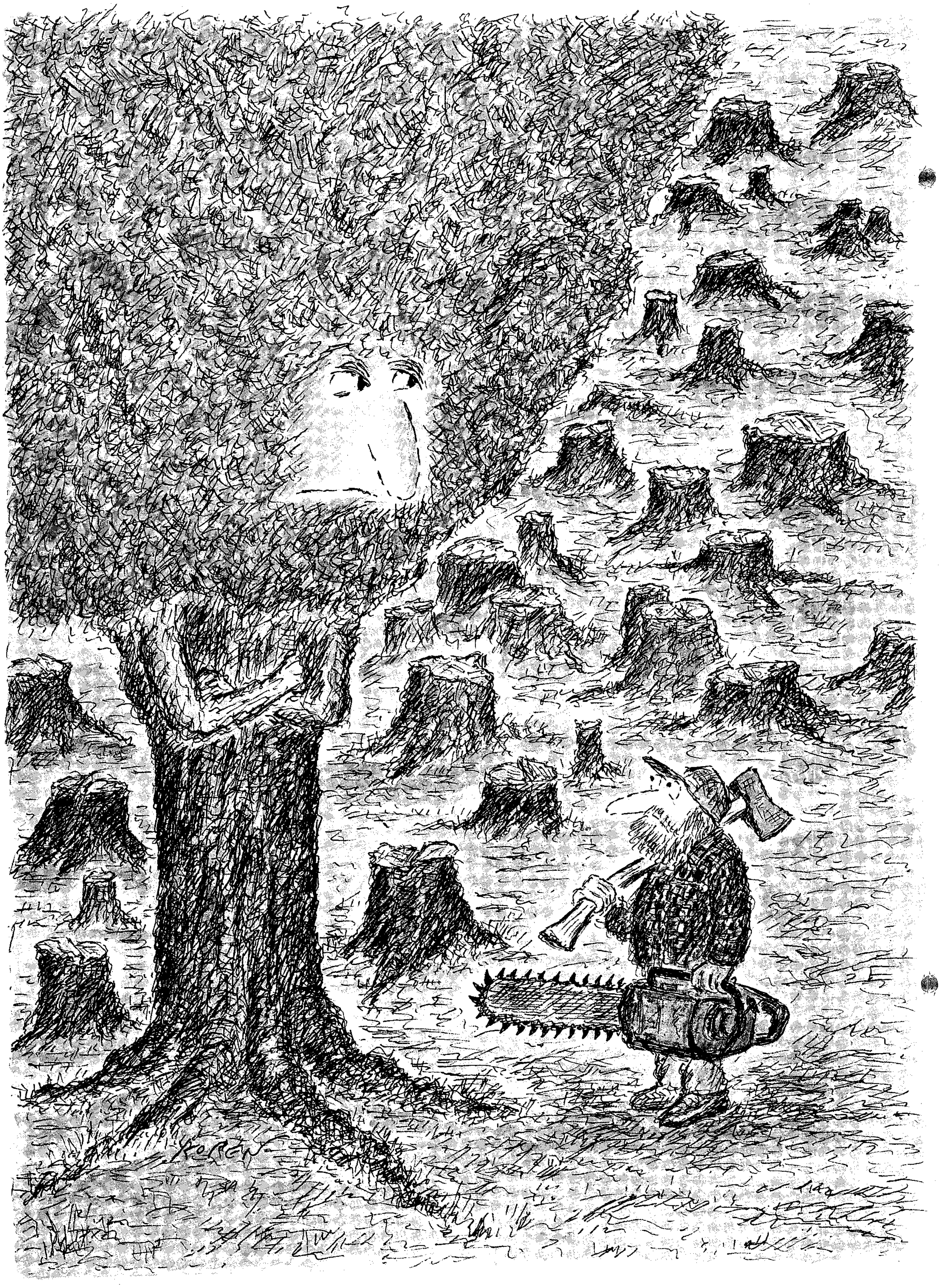
"Then pathology and anomalies," she said. "Any indication of disease—a broken bone, TB, a filling in a tooth, any biological or man-made alteration—ante-mortem, post-mortem, or peri-mortem, which means around the time of death. It's important to remember that rats outnumber us in this city. We see a good deal of 'post-mortem carnivore chewing.' Anomalies are little genetic features that everybody possesses. Some correspond with race. There are over four hundred in any given skeleton, over a hundred and fifty in the mouth alone.

"Another question is 'occupation/behavior-related stress on bone.' For example, dancers hyperextend and hyperflex their feet. They're also subject to necrotic cysts on the hip. Have you ever seen the dancer Juliet Prowse? She can extend her leg right up to her head. Now, I've never seen her bones, and I hope I never do, but I bet she has a necrotic cyst like you wouldn't believe. There are patterns of pathologies, known indicators. A writer—your hand and right-arm bones would be longer, and there would be pronounced muscle markings. A boxer I saw was amazing. He had broken and healed cheeks, multiple broken ribs, a fractured sternum, a fracture at the end of his wrist, and there were changes in the hip as well. I remember the skeleton of a cowboy that used to be at the Smithsonian with stresses in his arms and legs. His feet are



ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY EDWARD KOREN

THE MOST UNKINDEST CUT



a mess—his heels, from digging in the ground when he roped calves. All this goes into a data base.

"Last is personal identification. We reiterate the biological profile—age, race, sex, and stature—and give it to the police with recommendations. There are cases where I say, 'Don't even try.' Much as I hate to say it, sometimes I have to say it's not worth it. Some homeless people just go by street names, and sometimes they even change these. I've only seen one homeless person I.D.'d in ten years, and we only got a street name for him. I determined a limp from the biological profile, and the police canvassed the area where he was found. There were no records, no real name. It's horrible to say, but the homeless are a low priority. Homicides are the top priority.

"A complete skeleton takes anywhere from twenty-four to thirty-six hours of work. The more bones, the more information. I do all the photography, statistics, and clerical work—all the way down to the phalanges. Anything could wind up in court. Lawyers love me. I've testified in nine or ten cases, all but one of them homicides. That was a civil case, where a woman sued. Well, her husband died, and he was cremated. She got the urn back home and opened it, looked at this ash and bone chips, and said, 'This is not my husband.' I suppose she won—they settled. I gave opinions on age, sex, and race, did the microscopy. He may have been there, but there were other things, too."

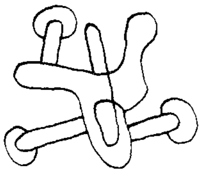
Peggy Caldwell's most difficult challenge and her greatest success was the case of Veorah Turner, who was found in a garbage bag in a junked refrigerator in an abandoned building in 1986. She had been dead for two years. Ms. Caldwell was eager to award credit to Detective Michael Burke, who searched for the killer for the next four years. Veorah was buried in Potter's Field, was identified and exhumed a year later, and the killer was arrested three years after that.

"I estimated her as being between twenty and twenty-five, probably twenty-three," Ms. Caldwell said. "Actually, she was twenty-one. I was off because she had two children and was a drug abuser, both of which overage a skeleton. It turned out that she was an American black woman, five feet five, and very pretty, a beautiful girl. I estimated her as being anywhere from five to seven years dead, but she was only two years. I didn't realize what plastic did. The killer was her drug supplier, and they may have had some other relationship. There was an argument over money, and he strangulated her with what's called a Spanish windlass—a wire with a handle, you twist it shut. It certainly was efficient.

"Detective Burke was great—it wouldn't have happened without him. My part was pure anthropology, a technique called video superimposition. At the trial, everyone was mesmerized by it—judge, jury, and lawyers. I met her sister, her mother, and one of her children there, and they were very grateful. With video superimposition, you basically make a skull and see if the face fits. You have life and death photos and look for dentition overlap and show how they match. Fortunately, in life she was smiling."

> And you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who went with you, and say to them: Thus I will smash this people and this city, as one smashes a clay pot so that it cannot be repaired. And Topheth shall be a burial place, for lack of a place to bury elsewhere. Thus I will do to this place and its inhabitants, says the Lord; I will make this city like Topheth.
>
> —*Jeremiah 19:10-12.*

Detective Raul Figueroa works in the Medical Examiner's Unit of the Missing Persons Squad, where his job is "to find lost people, one way or another." He finds bodies for names, and names for bodies, and he traffics almost exclusively in bad news. He is in his late forties, powerfully built, handsome, with thick dark hair and a mustache. His manner is confident and intelligent, sympathetic and low-key. "Normal people are found," he says. "Most homicides, they leave 'em where they drop. Maybe the mob doesn't, but most others don't take the trouble to hide a body."



The primary route of identification is through fingerprints, whose basic configurations—whorls, loops, and arches—are further refined into specific details called points. Most experts need at least eight points to make a match. For missing persons, fingerprints are circulated through the city, state, and federal systems. For homicides, they are also checked with the latent- and partial-print records of the New York Police Department. City records come back within a day, and state records take up to four weeks, but federal can take months, or longer.

"The quality of the prints can vary a lot," Detective Figueroa said to me one day in his office. "One family came in with a passport—it had a print on it that was terrible. Another man, a retired Army colonel from Arizona, had a military I.D. card on him, and it was great—we got thirty-four points on it. I've been doing this for eight years. It's a matter of knocking things down. I'm only as good as the information I get. If I ask how long they're missing, or from where, and the family say they don't know, then chances are they won't ever know. In a month, I might have thirty people, fifty people come in looking for somebody. A lot aren't just not dead, they're not even lost—they're a guy who met a woman and left his wife. The guy may wind up here if the wife catches up with him, but until then . . .

"Sometimes I wind up arguing with people. This one family came in, and after talking to them I said, 'Look, your son's either in the hospital or in jail—just wait a few days and he'll turn up.' They were shouting at me, 'He would never do anything like that! He would never!' He turned up a couple of days later—he was in jail. You get so good at this stuff! A woman had a brother—he hit the bottle a lot and he went to Westchester. Same thing—I said to wait for him. He turned up in the hospital in Valhalla.

"Maybe one in ten turns up dead. People fear the worst, especially the women. 'My son went to a party four days ago and hasn't come back.' I say, 'How old is he? Does he do this often? Is he generally responsible?' You pay attention to what they say, how they say it.

"Two years ago, a young Dominican lady comes in looking for her brother. I give a good search, and at this point I'm sure he's not dead, not killed, not missing. I go on vacation, come back two weeks later. A body comes in, skeletonized, tattered clothes. I spoke with the doctor, and he told me there wasn't much of his fingers left. I go to look and see. It was a male Hispanic, and the clothing was stuff only a Dominican would wear. I know this—I'm Hispanic. The doctor said, 'I won't agree on the Dominican.' So the report has him as a male Hispanic, twenty years old, five feet six, a hundred and thirty pounds, and two weeks dead. He had second-generation maggots—you get a new one each week. But he had an elongated skull, prominent cheekbones, deep sockets, light skin—I can read the pictures. I take the fingertips, and with a scalpel I take off the skin, what's left of the skin, put it over my fingers—I have gloves—ink it, and roll it. Perfect prints from three fingers. It was him.

"Those are easy. Hard is 'I haven't seen him since 1954.' That's what a woman said last winter who was looking for her brother. But from the information she provided I knew he was a heavy drinker, an alcoholic, who stayed on East Ninth Street. After thirty-five years I knew he wouldn't travel, so I searched the roster by name, by year, went through the pictures. We had three Martínezes for that year. I saw that they found one of them on Ninth Street, and I saw that the approximate age was right, too. So I got five post-mortem pictures that were more or less alike, and she picked him out right away. She says, 'Now I know my brother's dead. Thank you.'

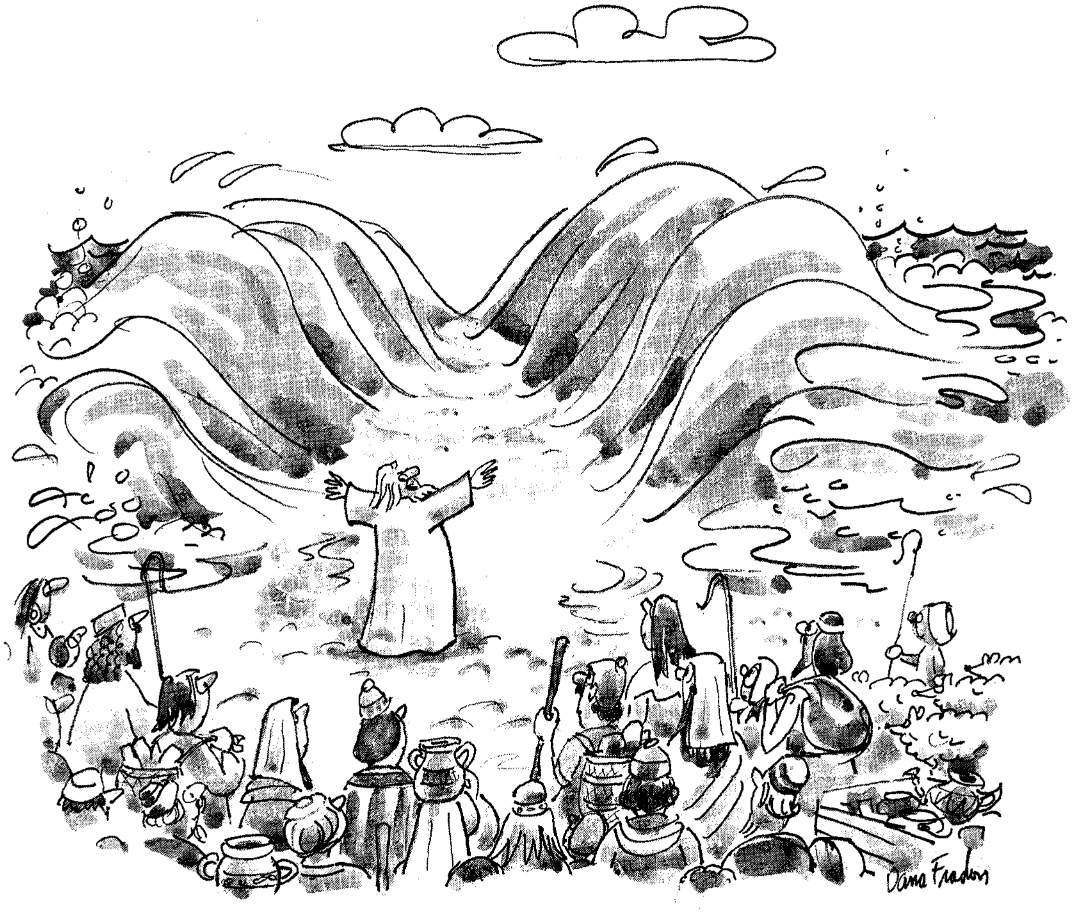
"I'm occasionally wrong." He waved at a picture on a bulletin board above his desk: a thin middle-aged man with frizzy hair, a bald spot, and a mustache. "I have the exact man downstairs! But the man downstairs has no bald spot. And, of course, the fingerprints don't match. But when I saw him I was sure—the resemblance was so strong. It's not easy. There's guesswork. Sometimes it might be six months before we fill in the cause of death, depending on DNA, serology, toxicology. I get calls from all over the world. One was from a German national—he couldn't find his son. The boy was a transient. I had a number of white male floaters from the same general time, and I had every reason to believe he was one of them. But we had X-rays of him, and none of them fit, so when the father called back I told him that he was probably alive. I was ninety-per-cent sure he was not dead in New York City. We did find him later, in a mental ward.

"Summer is busy, and the holidays, too. More homicides in the warm weather, when a lot of people are out in the street, and more suicides in December and early January. Most of the floaters we get in the summer. The gases in the body heat up, and they pop up to the surface. Floaters are almost all homicides and suicides. If ten come up, we're probably looking for three. We have the Harbor Police, so we get everything, even if the body's a few feet offshore at Weehawken."

We looked through a thick leather-bound ledger labelled "Unknowns." On each page were Polaroid head shots of men and women of all ages and races, in various degrees of trauma and states of decay. They stared open-eyed with shut mouths, or with shut eyes and open-mouthed, toothless smiles. There were white people burned black, and black people leached pale by immersion in water, and people with complexions of green and purple. There were crushed skulls and peaceful faces of the kind that inspires the funeral-parlor platitude "He could be sleeping."

"This one's mummified," Detective Figueroa said, as he turned the pages. "Guess it was hot. Him, he was probably a squatter in an abandoned building in Harlem. Here's a floater. This was Karen, a prostitute, a floater. She was in a footlocker weighted down with cinder blocks—how she came up I don't know."

Red lines were drawn through most of the pictures, indicating successful identification. There is an "unverified" designation, which ordinarily means that identification was found on the body but was uncorroborated by any personal or forensic means. Detective Figueroa said that the unverifieds proved correct most of the time. He pointed to a smiling skull, some shreds of green-white flesh. "A mother and a wife came in, they had a suicide note that said this guy, Marvin, was going in the river. Serious stuff. It was cold weather, January, and he came up in May. You could barely tell if it was human by then. And I had three floaters from



"Remember, this is a one-shot, not an entitlement."

around that time, but this guy here had a little gap between his front teeth. You can make it out—look, just there. Also, they said he was a hundred and thirty-five pounds, which is— Well, here, of course, he has a lot less skin. And they said he was wearing navy-blue sweatpants, which he still has on. But it was the dental records that made the I.D. final."

He closed the book. "You can tell the life from the face, the fingers, and the teeth," he said. "Stretch marks—a woman who looks thirty is probably twenty. Homeless, per se, are a small percentage of the cases we deal with, but probably add up to more than I'm aware of. A lot die in Bellevue, and we might not know them as homeless if they're from the hospital, where they've been cleaned up and fed. You can see it a lot easier if they're off the street, from the clothes. They might have lice, or the fingers would show it—all the muck under the nails. You wouldn't let them in your house. But other homeless, especially women, are very fastidious and keep themselves up. Little old ladies who could be your grandmother."

"Son, they say your generation doesn't have as much to look forward to as my generation did. Do you want to talk about it?"

• •

When we finished talking, the detective put away the ledger and took out a thick file of thank-you notes. He had an expression of near-apology, of resigned and weary sympathy, which is probably a professional asset. The messages in the file were from people of diverse backgrounds and levels of education, some typed on letterhead, some scrawled in Magic Marker on notebook paper. Some were generic greeting cards, signed without embellishment. "Most when they call me up—I got three this morning—they're frantic. They say, 'If you can't find him, no one can,' or 'You're the only one who can help.' Things like that. I like that—I feel good about the job then. Not that I do this job so people thank me. But they do, and it makes it worthwhile."

As long as anyone can remember, Abbot & Abbot Box Company has built the coffins for Potter's Field. The coffins are all made of white pine, and six models are available. No. 1 is six inches by eighteen by five, and, according to Deborah Vasquez, an administrative assistant at Abbot & Abbot, is for "babies but also for body parts." No. 1 coffins cost three dollars and fifty-five cents each, wholesale, and are sold in lots of two hundred. No. 5 coffins are for "most normal adults," and measure eighteen inches by seventy-four by twelve. In an order of seventy-five, they cost forty-five-ninety apiece. No. 6, the largest, are twenty-eight by eighty-two by twenty-two. In a lot of five, the price for a No. 6 is sixty-three-fifty.

"The No. 6 coffins aren't really for people who are taller but for people who are heavier. It sounds a bit crude, but when they put them in they sort of fold them in by the shoulders," Ms. Vasquez says.

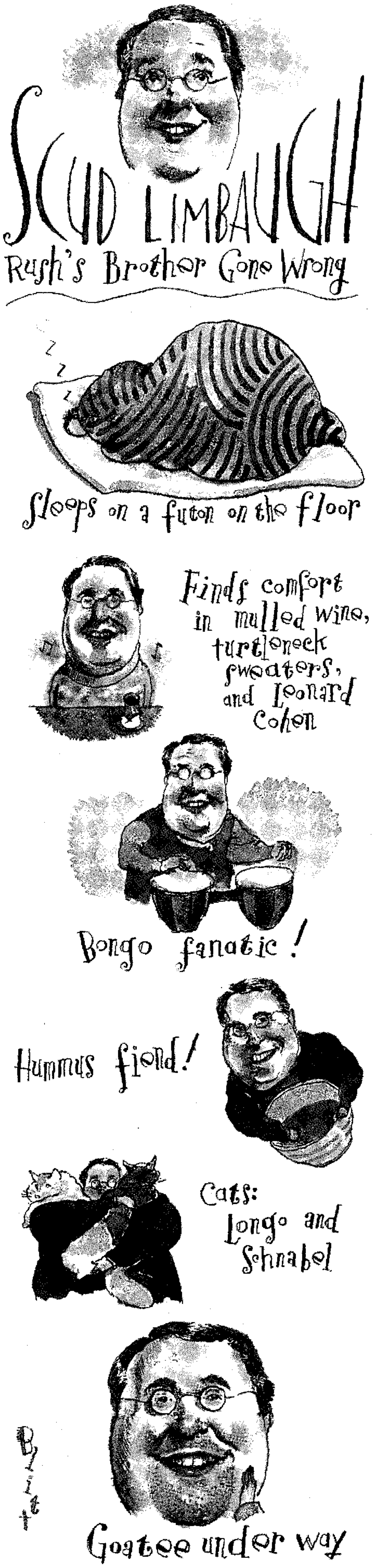
Have there been any complaints?

"Never."

> I know this was what the Lord meant, so I bought the field in Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, paying him the money, seventeen silver shekels. . . . In their presence I gave Baruch this charge: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both the sealed and the open deed of purchase, and put them in an earthen jar, so that they can be kept there a long time. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.
>
> —*Jeremiah 32:8-9, 13-15.*

THOUGH Potter's Field is now on Hart Island, half a mile to the east of City Island, there are eight earlier Potter's Fields scattered around the city. During the Revolutionary War, Colonial prisoners were buried by the British in the Old Negroes Burial Ground, north of City Hall. More dead were buried below 195 Chrystie Street, on the Lower East Side, and below Washington Square, Madison Square, the main branch of the Public Library, and the Waldorf-Astoria. More than a hundred thousand bodies from these last two sites were reinterred on Ward's Island in 1845. A site on Randall's Island was also used, until 1868, when the city bought the hundred and one acres of Hart Island, for seventy-five thousand dollars.

One morning last September, I waited at the ferry slip at the end of Fordham Street, on City Island, for the bodies that were to go to Potter's Field that day. The Health and Hospitals


SCUD LIMBAUGH
Rush's Brother Gone Wrong
z z z
Sleeps on a futon on the floor
Finds comfort in mulled wine, turtleneck sweaters, and Leonard Cohen
Bongo fanatic!
Hummus fiend!
Cats: Longo and Schnabel
Goatee under way
Blitt

Corporation delivers them by truck; the Department of Transportation runs the ferry over to Hart Island; and the Department of Correction supervises the burials there. The slip is fenced off. Inside are a Department of Correction trailer painted official city colors—blue, white, and orange—and a wooden shed painted green with a white shamrock on the side. To the north, I could see a recreational marina, and to the south a nautical scrap heap, with a rusted tugboat foundering on the gravel.

Captain Anthony DeMeglio has been in charge of the city's burial operations for the past two and a half years. He is sturdy and compact, and speaks with military precision in an *echt* Brooklyn accent. "There's two different sections of the burial ground—for babies and adults," he said. "Babies, you know, they're small, so you keep them separate. We bury adults six to a grave, three deep and two long, head to toe. We stagger 'em, in case we have to do a disinterment. We do a hundred of those a year, more or less. All disinterments are done Mondays, because there are no burials that day. Burials are Tuesday to Friday. On Mondays, a funeral director—has to be a licensed funeral director—picks up the disinterred bodies from a cooler over here. There's a two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar fee. We won't hold 'em here forever. He's not out by the weekend, he goes back in the ground. We can get 'em back out of the ground as late as about nine years after they've been buried. You'd be surprised. I pulled a body out, it was seven years in the ground. We pulled it out—it happened to be an ex-inmate—and he had his clothes on, he was wrapped in whatever, his skin was all intact and all. He was just flat, that's all."

The burial detail is made up of inmates from C-76, a cell block at Riker's Island. Most of the inmates at Riker's are detainees, awaiting trial, but C-76 houses those sentenced to a year or less. Only those with a low classification are eligible for burial detail—mostly misdemeanants without pending cases or warrant histories. Burial detail has always been voluntary. Other voluntary details include the mess hall, custodial or landscaping work, and such prison industries as the laundry and the bakery, which service shelters and other city agencies. "At best, it's all semi-skilled labor," Captain DeMeglio says. "Thirty-seven cents is top dollar. At the mess hall, say, maybe you'll start 'em off at a quarter—tell 'em, 'You do good work, I'll give you a raise.' You know, we'll raise 'em a nickel. It works. They laugh, but it works."

We were joined by Tom Antenen, a wry, angular man who is a spokesman for the Department of Correction and was there to escort me on my tour. It was twenty minutes before nine, and the day was warm and hazy. A black truck, the morgue wagon, rumbled down the gravel drive. "Speak of the devil," Captain DeMeglio said.

The black truck brought six coffins, all No. 5s, to join approximately seven hundred thousand that were already on the island. Though in the seventies a fire destroyed ten years of records, making an exact census impossible, the population of Hart Island is known to be greater than that of the city of Boston. "Three thousand a year, up to around five thousand in the past—that's the general range for the number of burials," Antenen said. "Except, for some reason, in 1946, right after the war, there were eleven thousand. Don't know why."

The day's delivery, which was from the Kings County morgue, included:

Derrick Richards, male, age 26, died at Downstate Medical Center on August 19, 1992.

Auguste Heran, male, age 46, died at 334 Montgomery Street on August 3rd.

Susan Brown, female, age 64, died at Coney Island Hospital on August 29th.

The three other coffins contained unidentified remains.

The truck rolled onto the ferry, a sturdy old tub named the Michael J. Cosgrove, and began the half-mile trip to Hart Island. Captain DeMeglio described procedure over the diesel roar of the engine. "These are the permits. We got six coffins. We got one, two, three permits. All right, these three are identified. Say we got Joe Blow over here. We write his name on the side of the box, we write his number, too, and put the permit on the side of the box. These other three are refuse. That's limbs, body parts, things like that. These go deep in the hole, because nobody's gonna want to have them back."

Hart Island is shaped like the haunch of a horse—a mile long, a third of a mile wide at its northern extreme, and an eighth of a mile at the south end. It is grassy and mostly flat, an expanse of meadow and lawn with thickets of oak and chestnut obscuring the remains of a few decrepit buildings. The ferry slip is on the center of the western shore, near the part of the island that was once inhabited. The inmates assigned to burial detail were waiting at the slip. Fourteen had been assigned to the detail for the day, with perhaps half again as many guards. The inmates were black, white, and Hispanic, and appeared to be in their late teens or early twenties. They wore uniforms consisting of jade-green work shirts and trousers, some cut off to shorts, and a few had added bandannas. Several were quiet and kept to themselves, but there was loud conversation and laughter among most of the inmates and among the officers, too.

Tom Antenen walked me around the island as the inmates changed into coveralls. Just beyond the ferry slip, we came to an eight-foot granite cross with the legend "He calleth His own by name." We passed a series of trailers used by officers and inmates to dress, shower, eat, and relax in. These and a garden of tomato plants were all surrounded by hurricane fence topped with razor wire. On a small hill was a thirty-foot rectangular white tower with a cross and the word "Peace." The austere tower, which was designed and built by inmates in the forties, presented a contrast with a modest and rather eccentric granite memorial nearby, which had been provided by the family of Al Piccone, a civilian backhoe operator at Potter's Field. Shaped like a tombstone, it was engraved with two crosses and a pair of open books inscribed "Alpha" and "Omega," with the lines:

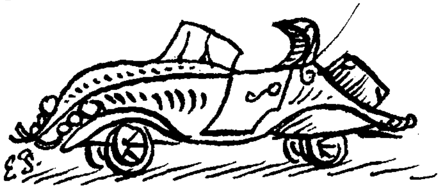
Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit
For Theirs Is The Kingdom Of Heaven.
My Child,
Peace I Leave To You
My Peace I Give To You.
The Almighty Has His Own Purposes.
He Must Have Loved Them
He Made So Many Of Them.
Cry Not For Us
For We Are With The Father.
No Longer Do We Cast Shadows
On The Ground As You Do.
We Are At Peace.

The first eight lines are a kind of modernist composite: two lines from the Beatitudes, a blessing from a Communion prayer, and two remarks attributed to Abraham Lincoln. The last five lines may be original verse.

A lane of willows, one struck down by recent lightning, took us east along a gravel path. We passed a long, low brick building that had originally been used as a stable, then as a garage, and was now unused—the red of the brick spreading like rust beneath streaks of old whitewash. A collapsed fence of wrought-iron wickets and brick, a narrow plot of wildflowers—aster, yarrow, black-eyed Susan, Queen Anne's lace—surrounded a sixteen-foot obelisk, covered in flaky white paint, commemorating some of the Civil War dead who had been reinterred here from Long Island half a century ago. On the eastern shore, all but hidden in vegetation, was a compound of abandoned brick buildings with the message "PRISON KEEP OFF," in white block capitals, on a wall facing Long Island Sound. In shallow waters a few yards offshore was a dinghy, half sunken in the muck. Gulls were crying as they flew overhead, and cormorants were sunning themselves, wings outstretched, on rocks exposed by low tide.

In its dozen decades of public use, Hart Island has been the site of hospitals for the insane, for yellow-fever and tuberculosis patients, and for poor women. A dismal pragmatism often positioned such facilities where they would have convenient cemetery access. The island has also been the site of a boys' reformatory, a workhouse for drug addicts and short-term prisoners, and a driving school for chronic traffic offenders. For several years, a hopeful enterprise put aged and infirm prison inmates to work repairing old toys as Christmas gifts for poor children. Budget cuts and changing theories of penal and health reform ended most of these experiments, and the fiscal crisis of the nineteen-seventies ended everything except twice-weekly burials.

Captain DeMeglio drove with us to the southern part of the island for the interments. The oldest graves are to the north, where the island is as still and as green as an abandoned country village. Bones are sometimes found on the beach there, below a ten-foot dirt bluff, as erosion frees them from the soil. To the south, the island narrows, and the ground is as pitted and furrowed as a construction site.



In the truck, Tom Antenen asked Captain DeMeglio, "What's the white on these trees?"

"Paint."

"For what purpose?"

"To decorate the cemetery."

A clamorous yellow backhoe filled the air with engine groans and a grinding metallic din. The morgue wagon was there, and so were the guards and the inmates. The inmates had changed into their coveralls, and were wearing black rubber boots and white cotton gloves. In teams of four, they slid each coffin from the bed of the truck and laid it on the grass.

A guard shouted, "O.K., first box! O.K., go straight there, put it down! That's it, that one, that comes over here. Easy, stop if you think you're gonna drop it."

Another guard shouted, "Four guys on a box! Four! Four! I want four guys on a box! Not five! Four! Four! Four!"

One inmate wrote the names and burial numbers, in black crayon, on the coffins' lids and sides; another attached the permits. A third gouged the burial number into each lid with a router hooked up to a gas-powered generator. The "refuse" went in first. The backhoe lifted each coffin and deposited it in the trench with a shove, forcing it into position. An inmate shovelled fiercely alongside, filling the seams with dirt. Audible above the sound of the backhoe, the generator, and the router were the crisp cuts of the spades into the earth.

It was all over quickly. The first two unlabelled boxes were put down in a trench about forty feet long, fifteen feet wide, and ten feet deep. Then another unlabelled box and Susan Brown's coffin were put down. Then the coffins of Derrick Richards and Auguste Heran.

"It doesn't take much more than an hour," Tom Antenen said. "If you have more bodies, you bring out more guys. The inmates check the manifests, do the routing and the burials. They make the markers—pour the concrete in a mold—and paint them, do landscaping. They do everything. Burials and disinterments.

"Most of the stories you hear about are disinterments. There are no celebrities or famous people here I've ever heard of. There was, three or four years ago, a visiting diplomat from—I don't recall which foreign country, but he was stationed in the embassy in Washington, D.C. He came up to New York for a weekend or what have you, and he died on a city bus. When the police responded, he had no identification on him. Figure he was robbed, right? So it went through the normal process. The M.E. came, nobody claimed the body, and he was buried here. An inquiry was made that eventually went to the police department. They checked their files—missing persons, dead bodies, and whatnot—and eventually a match was made. He was disinterred, sent back to Washington, and then back to his country."

I asked whether the ghoulish nature of the labor affected the morale of the work details.

"No, there's no trouble," Antenen said. "The ones who don't want to do it don't come out here. Every now and then, maybe, someone might, but we'll just put him on landscaping, or something. They're happy to be out—they're on the boat, in the fresh air and the sunshine. This is a good assignment."

Afterward, five inmates stood by the truck, three black, two white. The oldest was white, and was visibly addled; wearing sideburns and a droopy mustache, he seemed more Ozark than Outer Borough. He declined an interview, walking away. Tommy was white, pugnacious; Donald and Watson were black and calm; Jean was West Indian, and spoke in a soft, haunted voice. "I buried eight hundred and forty-six once, all of them little babies," he said. The others ignored him.

"Is this a good detail?" I asked them.

"Yeah, you get outside, man. To get out of there, man—anything."

"Day like today, man. Nice."

"Definitely."

What are you in for?

"You gotta be, like, a low classification to be out here. Like Murder One, no. Rape, no. You gotta be low."

What are you in for?

"Drunk driving. I got six months, you believe it? For that?"

"Boostin'. You know, I got some clothes."

"Petit larceny."

"Drugs. Misdemeanor. Yeah."

Does this bother you?

"Naah."

"It's good experience."

For what?

The inmate frowned and turned away.

Tyson, short and muscular, had a full upper set of gold teeth with "HANE" spelled across his incisors. I asked if he had ever worked the detail before. He seemed perplexed, as if by a breach of protocol: "You want me to tell you how much time I have first?"

Another inmate took notice of my tape recorder: "I want to say hello to somebody. My name is David Mc——. I want to say hello to Marybelle. Two months."

"I want to say hello to my girl, too—she know who she is!"

"What magazine is this gonna be at? You takin' pictures?"

A guard called over, "This guy, he wants his fuckin' picture taken? Tell him it's in the fuckin' post office."

That signalled the end of the detail.

> Then Judas, who had handed him over, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, began to regret his action deeply. He took the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders and said, "I did wrong to deliver up an innocent man!" They retorted, "What is that to us? It is your affair!" So Judas flung the money into the temple and left. He went off and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the silver, observing, "It is not right to deposit this in the temple treasury since it is blood money." After consultation, they used it to buy the potter's field as a cemetery for foreigners. That is why that field, even today, is called Blood Field. On that occasion, what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:
>
> "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter's field just as the Lord had commanded me."
>
> —*Matthew 27:3-10.*

DERRICK RICHARDS and Susan Brown died in Brooklyn hospitals. There are over fifteen hundred listings for Brown in the Brooklyn phone book; none are for Susan. There are two hundred and ninety-four listings for Richards in the Brooklyn phone book, including one for Derrick. I called the number and explained whom I was looking for and why. Derrick Richards said, "Not this kid. No. No relation. Sorry. What a morbid question! What was it, a drive-by?"

Montgomery Street, in Crown Heights, is shady and residential, with four-, five-, and six-story brick prewar apartment houses and a few tenement buildings. The apartment houses are grandly named: The Dearborn, Empire Court, Monos Court, Monos Arms. The neighborhood is mostly West Indian and mostly well kept: there is little trash in the streets, and many of the houses have gardens in the front—tidy plots of impatiens and marigolds. At No. 334, there are flowers, tropical-looking vegetable vines, and even a few stalks of corn. The names on the door are mostly French. In the marble foyer, there is a new glass-and-steel security door, and inside there are ratty red welcome mats.

The first time I went to 334 Montgomery Street, I found the superintendent sitting at a card table on the sidewalk. He was a middle-aged black man from St. Vincent, who wore a baseball cap and a windbreaker and spoke in a heavy French accent. With him was an older friend, who sat stiff and silent, with two half-pints of pale-yellow brandy in paper bags on the sidewalk be-

PAESAGGIO NOTTURNO

Full moon, the eighth of March; clouds
Cull and disperse; dog's bark, moon
Tracking stage left to stage right;
Maple ganglia, Munch sky.

Small night that pulls me inside,
Fingerless, fatherless; night
Crystalline, sleep-shaped and sharp,
The bulb tufts odd teeth; nightmouth.

All things are found in all things,
Wind in the peach trees, time's dust:
It's in light that light exists.
All flesh, at last, comes to you.

—CHARLES WRIGHT

side him, one bottle open, one empty. Between the two men, on the table, was a set of dominoes in a box.

I asked about Auguste Heran.

The super denied that Auguste lived there, then remembered him when I said that Auguste had died the month before. He called to his friend, “Oh, yeah. Ol’ Frenchie. He die. You—” Then he broke into a rapid Creole. All the other questions he answered with “Oh, no, I didn’ know him,” in a tone of increasing exasperation.

The second time I went to Montgomery Street, I gained entry into the building. On the second floor, a door was open, and two West Indian women in their thirties chatted in the hall. After I offered to prove that I was not a police officer, one of the women led me back downstairs to the lobby to search for friends of Frenchie. “I am from Fort-de-France,” she told me. “You must go there. You will, you will enjoy it.”

We found Sammy—thin, in his early fifties, from Haiti—as he went to get his mail. The woman called to him and waited while he spoke, as if to insure that his answers would be satisfactory.

“He had two jobs. He had a girlfriend,” Sammy said.

“That was a long time ago,” she interrupted. “He have nobody, he have nothing—that was the hardest part. It was the saddest thing, you know. He was coming in, and the last time he come in he had to breathe in a tube. When we smoke out there, he couldn’t take the cigarette smoke. He died all alone. It was terrible. He had somebody else living with him, right? Sammy? A taxi-driver, a dark-skin guy. I don’t know. Sammy, maybe you show him where that guy is livin’.”

The woman left. Sammy was less inclined to talk. Frenchie, he said, was really a friend of Dominique, the woman Sammy lived with. I asked him some more questions. His answers:

“All the people here are from all different islands, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad, Jamaica, Haiti . . . ”

“No, he was married, but he had no wife, no family. He don’t have nobody there.”

“No, he worked two jobs before, but then he only had one job. Security. Fourteenth Street.”

“Yes, he went to church. I don’t know.”

So Frenchie was quiet, kept to himself, I asked.

“Yeah.”

He was friendly, a good neighbor?

“Oh, I don’t know!”

THE third time I went to Montgomery Street, I met Dominique Stephenson, a slim, pretty, first-generation Haitian-American. Sammy was there, too, but remained quietly in the kitchen, his presence made known only by the sizzle and scent of frying pork. Dominique showed me a Polaroid snapshot of Auguste Heran. A dark-skinned man of medium build, he was dressed in a short-sleeved green-and-white striped shirt with a collar. His body was half turned away from the camera; he had wire-rimmed glasses, a shy smile.

“This is him when he was a young guy, whatever,” Dominique said. “This was him! He was in his prime! He was liked. Everybody around here liked him, especially the girls. Every weekend, all us girls would meet over at Frenchie’s house. We’d all hang out. We’d bring the beer, we’d bring the liquor, we’d bring the cigarettes, we’d bring the cards and stuff, and we’d all hang out there—play music, cards. It used to be a whole bunch of girls and just Frenchie. And—oh! Everybody liked Frenchie. There’s nobody around here that didn’t like him. He was a cool guy. He used to live across the street, at the Dearborn, and then, about two years ago, two or three years ago, he lost his apartment, and he just crossed the street and started living upstairs here. He lived upstairs on the third floor, in C-9.

“Oh, honey, Frenchie loved to drink some liquor. Ha! Frenchie—he, I can’t tell you. I mean, he was just so cool! But he liked to talk shit a lot. He really liked to talk shit—let’s call it that. To you, with you, whatever. He’d remind you of things you’d done in the past—you know, with other people. He’d never let you forget nothing. That was Frenchie. He constantly repeats it to you and constantly lets you know about it.

“He was into his movies. He liked a good movie. And he liked football—yeah, he liked football. He liked action movies—like Clint Eastwood and all those things. Charles Bronson, things like that. He liked French music. They call it *compa.*

“He worked just one job. First, he was—what do you call that?—supervisor. I don’t know what kind of super-

TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC
M. Twohy

“The courts ruled that we had to open it up to all stuffed animals.”

visor. He went through some personal problems and things, but afterward he worked for the same company. It was somewhere around there, on Fourteenth Street. Oh God, I forget their name, but his ex-wife would be a good person to tell you. I mean, they weren't married legally, but they was together a long time. And then, you know, they broke up, but they were still friends. Her name is Niola, she could give you the details.

"His son is nine. His name is Johnny. Niola, Niola's husband, her kids—all of us used to go over Frenchie's house. It was nothing to hold grudges about, nothing like that. We all went to his house. The thing about it is, everybody was friends with Frenchie. Even if you had an argument with him, ten minutes later you would be back laughing with him.

"He used to go to church. He used to go out with us to those—you know—bus rides where you go out to Pennsylvania and you see processions and things like that. He used to go to church and everything. He was quiet, but he was cool. You know what I mean? Very cool, very cool, very calm, even when he was sick, because— You know what he died of? I think it was leukemia. Even when he was sick, when he was in the hospital. He knew he was gonna die. He knew. He knew that he didn't have too long. There was nothing that could be done. I think he was more angry than anything. Yeah. He was like, just, you know, all his friends and everything—he didn't want to see us. He didn't want us to be bothered. For the very last week or so. Before then, he was just his cheerful self. Then he got bitter. Not really bitter but upset. Angry, whatever. And he withdrew. He was in the hospital for a long time. He went in and out and in and out and in and out. They had to give him blood, they operated on him—all kinds of things. He said to us that when he died to give his body to Kings County. That's what he said to do with it. But, on the other hand, he checked himself out of the hospital and came home.

"How he was feeling—that's the last thing we discussed. You could see that he wasn't feeling so hot. You know, 'cause he had lost a lot of weight, he lost his appetite, he was, basically, depressed. I told him, 'Frenchie, you should have never checked out of that hospital,' but he said, you know, he missed home. He missed the neighborhood, all of us. It was summertime, also. He missed that. He shared the apartment upstairs, he had a roommate. Well, you know, he was calling him and calling him, and he never answered. So the guy was, like, 'Somebody check.' Niola was here, Niola was one of the first people to walk in that room and find him. The guy went in, and then Niola went, and then I went in. There he was.

"There was no preparations for a funeral—there was no nothing. The thing is that Frenchie did leave some money, but he left his son as his beneficiary. And his son is only nine years old, so the bank would not release it so we could bury him. And these things was left up to Niola. Niola said she tried to go to the bank, social services, and whatever else. House of Hill's, the funeral parlor right here, had him. The guy's name is Ralph. I guess he kept him for about ten or twelve days and then he released him to the city.

"What's that place called again? What would you be doing up there? How do they actually bury them on Hart Island? Do they dig a grave and bury them one by one? No? That's awful."

I called Niola. On the telephone, her voice was rough and heavy, sorrowful. She said, "Yes, he is the father of my son," and she asked, "When did they bury him?"

I told her.

"My God, oh my God . . . "

RALPH HILL, at the House of Hill's, said that it would cost around three thousand dollars to have Auguste Heran reinterred. The cheapest grave would cost seven hundred and twenty-five dollars, in Rosemount Memorial Park, in Newark; there would be transportation and professional costs. There would have to be a zinc-lined coffin, because of the odor. He said, "She gave conflicting stories from Day One, what she wanted to do—problems with money, and so on. I said, 'Let's have a direct cremation.' She never came back."

NIOLA NOEL lives in the Vanderveer Estates, a complex of fifty-nine six-story brick buildings in Flatbush. The halls are finished in a nicotine-brown stucco. Vandalism and decay are in abundant evidence: the glass of the outside door of Niola's building was shattered, and the handle was missing from the interior steel door, which was covered with graffiti and had to be pried open.

Niola's apartment, on the third floor, was large and spare and painted pumpkin orange. An acrylic double portrait of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King was hanging on one wall. Niola is Haitian, in her late thirties, and solidly built. She wore her hair brushed stiffly back. Her responses to my questions were soft and brief and general.

"My son is by him."

"A long time. I know him for a long time."

"He was a nice man. A very nice man."

"He took care of Johnny."

I asked her when she met Auguste.

"Oh, way back. A long time ago. Oh, he was a very nice man. That's his son."

Johnny appeared from another room. He was slender and wide-eyed, and wore shorts and a smudged white T-shirt.

What grade are you in?

"Second."

How do you like school?

"Arright."

"He bought him a bike. A month before he passed away," Niola said. A dark-blue mountain bike stood in the corner.

"That's a nice bike," I said. "Do you ride it around a lot?"

"No."

"Why?"

"It's broken."

Johnny returned to the other room. Niola absent-mindedly swept a cockroach from the table in front of us, then asked again when Auguste was buried, and where. She said that he gave her his bank card and told her to take out the money for Johnny. There was supposed to be "a couple of thousand" in the account. She said that the bank would not release the money until she presented a death certificate, and that she thought she could get the certificate only if she had buried him.

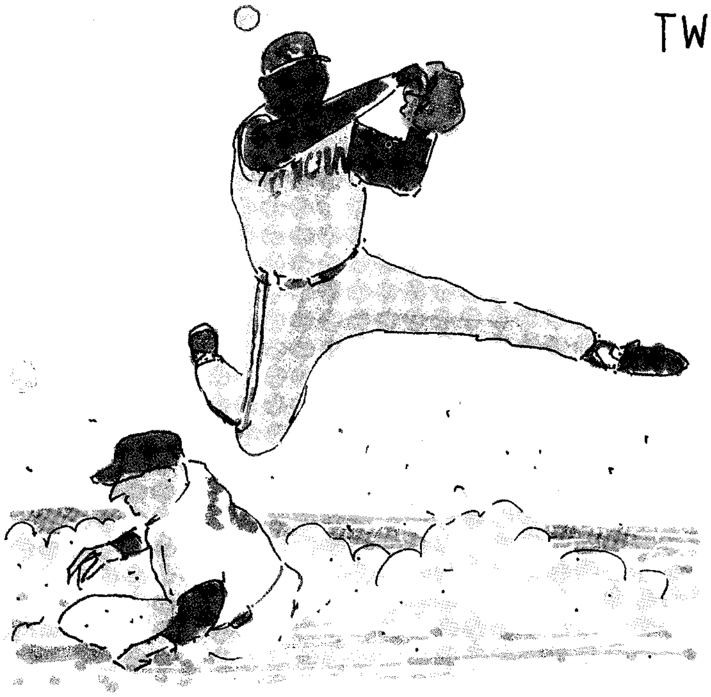
I told her that she didn't need to bury him in order to get a death certificate, and that she should keep the money for her son. She began to cry again. "I can go see him?"

I told her that a group from a church in the Bronx says Mass there at Easter.

"So maybe I can go at Eastertime? I would like to go see. He was a good man. He could be jealous. But, oh, he was a good man. A good man." ♦

TWIN-KILLING CHOREOGRAPHY

BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD



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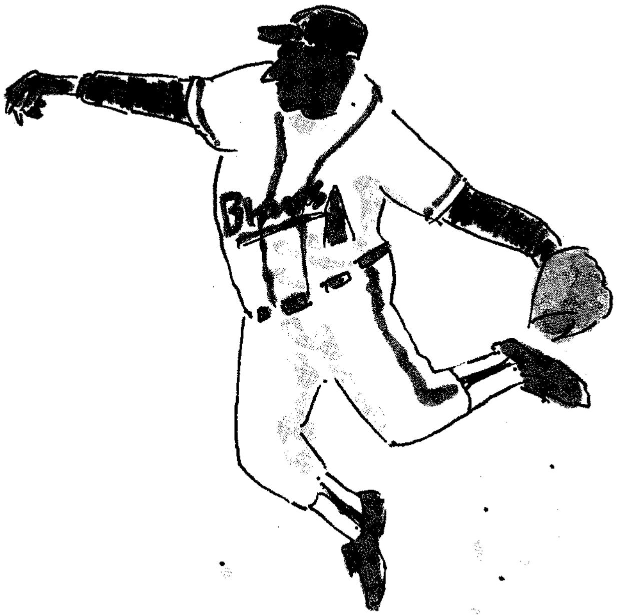

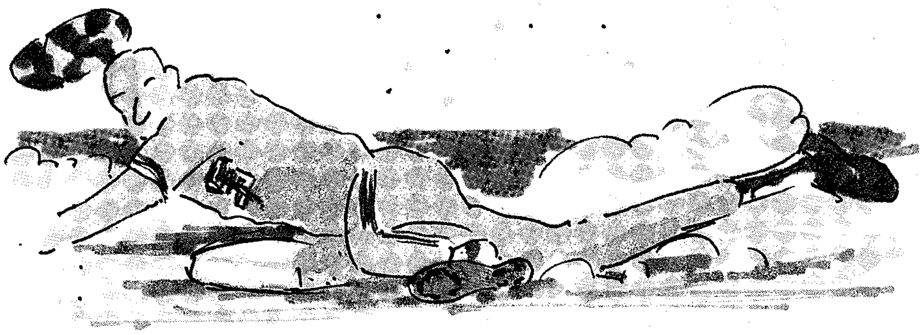

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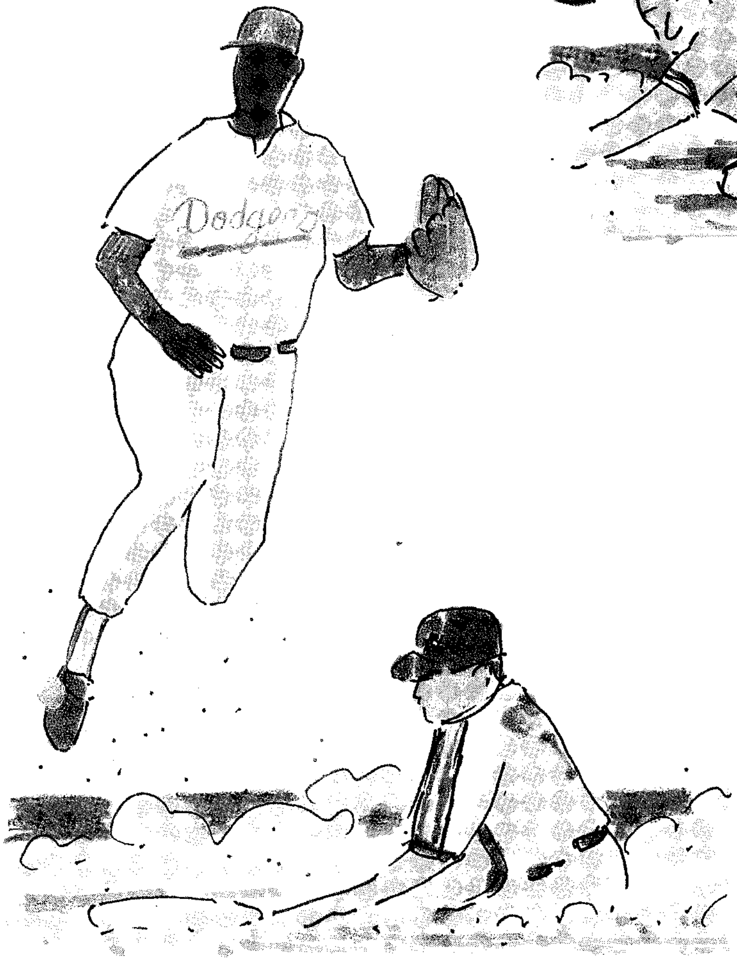

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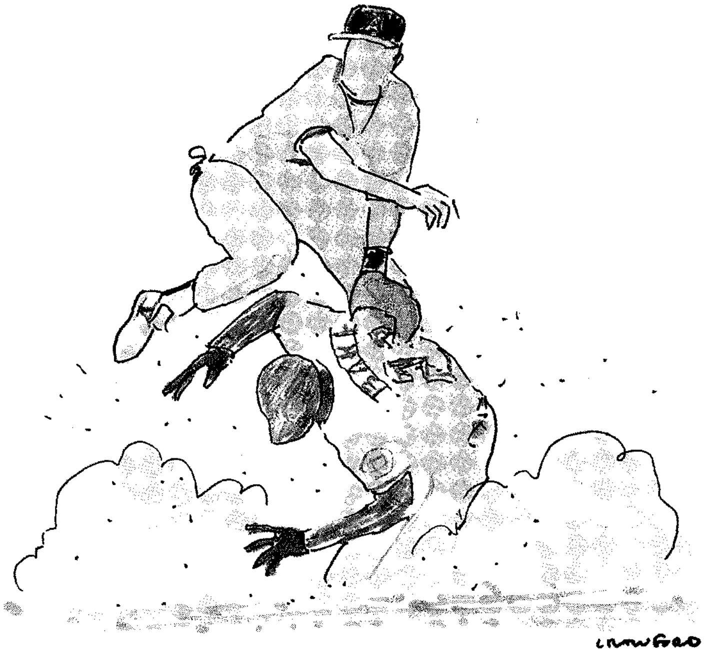


CRAWFORD

TOUR EN L'AIR

PERSONAL HISTORY

THE WARDEN'S WIFE

BY WILLIAM TREVOR

At night the lights of Dublin blinked below us. On a clear day, from halfway up Kilmashogue, you could see across to Wales. St. Columba's—a school with a reputation for aloofness, and skill on the hockey field—is set high in the Dublin mountains, established there in the eighteen-forties by the Victorian cleric who was later to found Radley. "Be ye as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves" had been the Saint's catchphrase, as many a sermon reminded us.

St. Columba's is the only public school of its kind in the Republic of Ireland, small within a small minority yet with a certain cachet, more confident of itself now than once it was. "That this house believes we are an outpost of empire" was a debating motion the term I arrived there, in 1944, for the last two years of my fragmentary education, knowing little of such delicate areas of life as art and music, the theatre and literature. My provincial accent was noticeable and was mocked. The rougher ambience of recent boarding establishments had not prepared me for the fact that pretty junior boys were called *bijoux*, and that the poet Horace—labored through with the assistance of Dr. Giles's "Keys to the Classics"—was more interesting because of that. In all sorts of ways, it was at St. Columba's where I first became aware that black and white are densities of more complicated grays.

Gowns were worn in the classroom and in Dining Hall, and surplices in Chapel on Sundays. The gowns covered the top half of the body only, and somewhat inadequately, but were useful for smuggling slices of bread to toast in the furnace room, for soaking up spills, and for polishing shoes. Traditionally, no junior was permitted to walk about with his hands in his pockets. Traditionally, on St. Patrick's Day the entire school, even the stout housekeeper, the cook, the bursar's secretary, and the two school nurses, assisted in the planting of potatoes. Traditionally, there were "cockfights"—one boy perched on another's shoulders, lashing out at a pair of rivals—and Cloister Cricket, and words with local meanings, different from the accepted ones, and small idiosyncrasies of behavior. Traditionally, the first fruits of the potato planting were eaten on St. Columba's Day.

In a sprawling deer park there was a ruined summerhouse where Robert Emmet was said to have courted Sarah Curran. There was a butler—a melancholy man called Flood, said to be the only survivor of a torpedoed troopship in the First World War—and a vast number of maids, the most memorable of whom was a lanky, bespectacled girl known as the Bicycle. There was a Mr. Chips—sweet-tempered and white-haired—from whose tobacco pouch you might occasionally take a fill, but you were on guard when he hove into sight in the Junior Dormitory on the occasions when some minor ailment sent you to bed early. There were variations of Mr. Perrin's relationship with Mr. Trail—Hugh Walpole's famous record of a schoolmaster's jealousy of a rival. The headmaster was known as the Warden.

In spite of its crème-de-la-crème reputation, St. Columba's in 1944 was a genuine microcosm. You didn't have to be clever to be there; and the sons of shopkeepers rubbed shoulders with the sons of farmers, bank officials, hard-nosed Northern businessmen, and aristocrats of the old Ascendancy. Reduced fees saw clergymen's sons through; well-to-do relatives were called upon by the impecunious. When it chose to, the school became a world of its own. Double-saving time was kept one summer, clocks an hour ahead of standard Irish time. No bathing attire was ever worn in the hilltop swimming pool, by boys or masters, since no one ever passed by. The school's meat was slaughtered on the premises; its farm supplied all vegetables and milk.

On the periphery was the Warden's wife. So shy that communication often seemed excruciating for her, the headmaster's wife was a bent figure in her forties, fingers tightly interlocked behind her back when she crept, crablike, into Dining Hall or Chapel. Her clothes were drab. Stockings of coarse blue wool established for her—though hardly by design—a certain intellectual reputation. Gray hair bushed horizontally from either side of her head, and the effort of smiling was clearly not easy. It was difficult to think up something to say to her.

Her husband was small and red-skinned, especially about the face—round and bouncy, like a ball. He was an English clergyman with a Home Counties accent, given to repeating that the Chapel was the center of school life. He regularly drew attention to a metal pouch, which he kept beneath glass, declaring that it had once contained the *holy writings of St. Columba*. He spoke frequently about a cow that was being fattened on the farm for dispatch to one of the ravaged areas of Europe as soon as hostilities ceased. Nellie the Postwar Cow, he jollily called this animal, the extra syllable he introduced into the word "cow" a joy for mimics. Our diet was an enviable one, we were regularly informed, and heard details of its calorific value. Bromide—or saltpeter—was added, we believed.

The Warden's wife was invariably silent while this inconsequential chatter was pursued. Her eyes were of some dark hue, not notably blue or brown, possibly black. Once, she had been beautiful; I often heard that said during my two years at St. Columba's, and perhaps it was true. Perhaps photographs had been seen, or perhaps it was because, since she appeared to have no present, she was being given a past. Gossip abhors a vacuum: in schools it is often without foundation, spun to break monotony. All that was certain was that no beauty remained.

Obliged to play some social part in her husband's ambitions for the school, she played no part whatsoever in its day-to-day routine. She was there at the lunchtime High Table, when the Warden was joined by his prefects, and at Sunday breakfast, when he was joined by his staff. On Sunday evenings she appeared in Chapel. Otherwise her life was private. She weeded flower beds in that part of the garden forbidden to the boys; only glimpses were caught of her—a shadow skulking by.

Born Mary Savery in 1901, she went to school in Ealing, attended both Oxford and Cambridge, obtaining a First in Theology at Lady Margaret Hall, the second woman to do so. Her awkwardness might have passed unnoticed in higher academic life, but could not in a community of beady-eyed boys. No one ever commented that this was an extraordinary marriage, yet in retrospect it seems it was. She was an intelligent woman, her husband a figure of fun. Yet the curate she'd been drawn to at Oxford may have given no hint of how the years would shape him later: pomposity does not always flower early, and the blinkers of those who court power are acquired along with the power itself.

"Bad taste" was the Warden's favorite expression when we knew him; in his clipped Cockney tones he railed against it as he might against the Devil Incarnate. He dropped so many names, and so frequently referred to his entry in *Who's Who*, that this coinage in his conversation had become as debased as his references to the postwar cow. Running had been his sport; honoring this healthy pursuit, he once led the school on a misty afternoon run through the deer park to the mountains beyond it. The mist became rain, and when a shortcut was considered wise there was an unhappy encounter with a local farmer. "Get off my land, you red-faced Saxon!" roared this man, to the delight of a hundred and sixty boys.

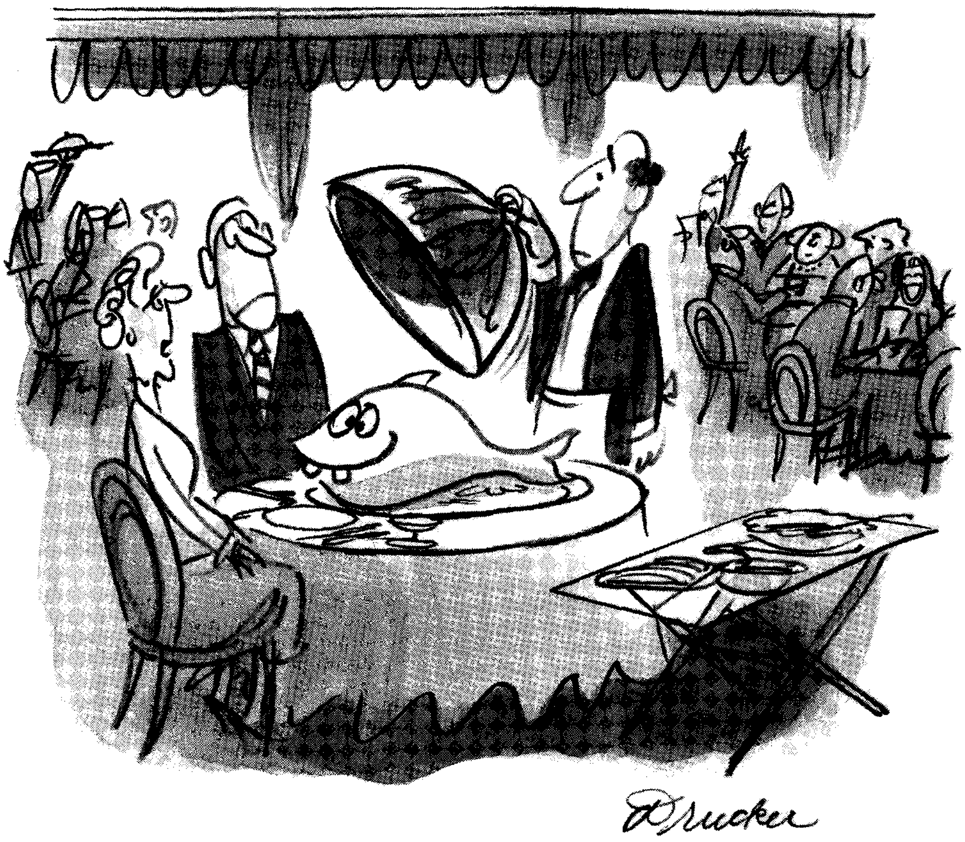
We never wondered what she made of it. We listened when her husband reported, personally, the nature of R.A.F. successes over Germany and the number of Luftwaffe planes destroyed. Did she, as many of us did, question the flattening of Dresden and the slaughter of its people at a time when the war was almost over and no military targets were involved? If she did, no doubt it was done silently.

Every so often the gaunt, cassocked figure of Brother Charles—a roving confessor—arrived to ease the guilt of persistent sinners. Repenting suicide attempts and thefts from the collection plate in Chapel, or practices culled from the "Encyclopædia of Sex," became a game, its culmination to catch Brother Charles's eye when in the Warden's company later. How often from her solitude must she have noticed what we were up to? How often must she have caught the whisper of a giggle when her husband, yet again, drew attention to the watercolor he claimed was by Turner or the chest he insisted had been the property of Anne Boleyn?

There were three children of the headmaster's marriage, two girls and a boy. Margaret was the older of the girls, a pert adolescent with a small army of followers from the middle and senior schools. Perhaps for want of anything better to report, gossip suggested that the Warden's wife took more than a passing interest in her older daughter's conquests. Tongue-tied among her husband's prefects at the lunchtime High Table, she was quoted as having once referred, out of the blue, to breast-feeding. So the rumor began that beneath an unprepossessing exterior, and perhaps related to her beauty in the past, this woman was more than a little aware of sex, her reference to her breasts as much evidence of it as her interest in "what went on" between her daughter and her followers. That she was allied to a man who was the declared enemy of the sensual life in all its aspects struck none of us as tragedy.

LATE in my career at St. Columba's I was involved in a series of nighttime excursions to a grillroom in the center of Dublin. We roused one another at half past twelve or one, crept from our dormitories, and borrowed the first bicycles that came to hand in the sheds. It was eight miles, all downhill, to the Green Rooster in O'Connell Street, where we ordered plates of fried food. Afterward, rousing the night porter at the Shelbourne Hotel, we attempted, always unsuccessfully, to persuade him to supply us with drink. The next day, we made up for our loss of sleep during Maurie Wigham's ineffably tedious double period of biology. Maurie Wigham was always relieved to see boys asleep, because the level of noise was less.

On the afternoon of May 8, 1945, the school and staff were summoned and the Warden announced that the war in Europe was over. He gave us details. He read out statements made by the Ger-



"Are you sure that's grouper?"

MY GOAL
-THE HAMPTONS
-FIRE ISLAND
-JONES BEACH
-ROCKAWAY
-CONEY ISLAND
-12TH ST. PIER
ZIEGLER

man generals and by Winston Churchill. It was, he said, a great day for the world and for the school, and added that he wished to see immediately all boys who had been breaking school rules by cycling down to Dublin in the middle of the night. It was suspected that he had known for some time but had held his fire, aware that the end of the war was close and might well be an occasion for spirited celebration.

Because it was one of the few night spots in Dublin at that time, the Green Rooster was popularly rumored to be a house of ill repute. With the interest in sexual matters ascribed to her, the Warden's wife was said to have alerted her husband to our true purpose in visiting it, since he, in his reluctance even to consider that sensual desire could occur in adolescence, would naturally not have suspected this. In spite of the fact that the Green Rooster was innocent of its racy reputation, random expulsions immediately took place, and in one case there was talk of legal action against the school for defamation of character.

If the Warden's wife had a role in the affair, it had probably to do more with an awareness of the world than of the nature of carnality. On the only occasion she spoke more than a few words to me in private it was to ascertain the truth or falsity of something that clearly interested her a great deal more than this imputed obsession. A boy was conducting an experiment with his digestion by not eating.

"Is this so?" the Warden's wife inquired, interrupting the pruning of a rose, secateurs still poised.

"Yes," I said.

"How long?"

"More than a fortnight now. That's what they say."

"Nothing at all?"

"He allows himself tea and milk."

"And why is he doing this? Is he protesting in some way?"

"He's interested, in a medical sense."

"Has he discovered anything? Is there a noticeable difference in him?"

"His breath is bad."

She nodded. It would be so, she agreed, only adding as she returned to her roses that some of the saints who starved themselves must have developed unpleasant breath; their cells or caves could not have been agreeable places to visit. I went away feeling I shared a secret with her, for I was certain that the conversation we had had would not be confided to her husband. It would not fascinate him, as clearly it had fascinated her, that a boy was experimenting with starvation. It was enough that there were Communists among his charges, and those who would not bow their heads during the Creed. He took them to task, exacting promises that satisfied him. He set his store by the sensible, the conforming, the moderate, and the clean of mind.

"Why?" he asked when I refused to become a prefect.

"I belong in the ranks, sir."

A blue bulb lit up outside the study door when he did not wish to be disturbed. He reached out now for the connecting switch. He told me to sit down.

"That's where my friends are, sir."

"Ah."

Behind his desk, he leaned back, rounder and redder than ever. He examined me steadily and then spoke very rapidly, telling me about his early days at Keble College, Oxford, and about a friend of his, another headmaster, who slept at night with three volumes on his bedside table: the Bible, "Alice in Wonderland," and "The Lighter Side of School Life," by Ian Hay. He spoke particularly of the latter and it was, in fact, "The Lighter Side of School Life," by Ian Hay, with which I left the study.

Later I agreed to become a prefect, because it was easier to say yes. It became my privilege to sit at the end of a table in Dining Hall for breakfast and tea, to refuse all food at those meals if I wished, to swagger a bit. Small boys acted as my servants, washing the dishes from which I had eaten eggs or baked beans in the Common Room. At High Table lunch, the prefects moved one seat to the left each day, so that once every so often a meal was taken next to the Warden and the following day next to his wife. I remember nothing of the Warden's conversation on these occasions, except his once divulging that he preferred waxy to floury potatoes. I recall his being encouraged to expand on the preference, to name the potatoes referred to, and the subject then advanced so that we might hear his opinion of mashed potatoes, roast, fried, and chipped potatoes, and which varieties were most suitable for each form of cooking. Sniggering was stifled. Flood, the butler, helped himself to a morsel of meat, as he often did when tedium set in.

Next to the Warden's wife, you had to bend your head in her direction because sometimes she was hard to hear. This was no doubt so when she had made her famous reference to breast-feeding. "You should go and see 'Ill Met by Moonlight,' " she advised me, referring to a play by Micheál Mac Liammóir. The next time round, she suggested a visit to O'Casey's "Red Roses for Me." Since I was the editor of the school magazine, she asked me if I intended to become a journalist and advised me that if I ever did I should first become an expert on a particular subject and corner it. "I don't know what I would have chosen to know a lot about," she murmured softly. But something in her tone suggested that she did.

"A veterinary surgeon, is it?" her husband speculated when my school days ended. "You're becoming a vet?"

"No, sir."

"Ah. Now, why did I imagine you were to be a vet?"

"I'm afraid I don't know, sir."

"Nor I. Nor I. You're sure about this?"

"I think you're confusing me with Gahan, sir."

"Nonsense. I know full well who you are."

The end of every term was rich in ceremony. All library books were handed back a week or so in advance so that stocks might be checked, so that no one could wander off with the Phaidon edition of Frans Hals or with "Brave New World." There was a considerable to-do about the organization of laundry, and trunks were fetched from the luggage room. The school photograph, taken a fortnight before, was attached to a board outside Dining Hall.

"Ah, yes, I'd meant to mention that. You look grumpy in the photograph."

"I'm sorry, sir. It's just my usual—"

"Prefects should set a less cheerless example. On occasion we all have to smile, you know, whether we like it or not."

"I understand, sir."

"You'll find in life that a happy disposition is half the battle. And in your chosen vocation you'll find that a smile does not come amiss with a dumb beast. I would warn you against the affectation of melancholy."

"Yes, sir."

"God's way is cheerfulness."

"I see, sir."

"I am glad that you do. A grumpy countenance achieves nothing."

"No, sir."

"I note you were not present when the conjurer visited recently. In that respect I would warn you against intellectual arrogance. Turn over a new leaf. In the beautiful words of the hymn, 'Go smiling forth, yet humility know.' "

"I will, of course, sir."

On the last night of term, I joined the trail of boys who lined up to shake the masters' hands, many of them bidding a final farewell. Afterward there was tea in the drawing room for the prefects. The Warden's wife was in a corner, no one bothering her, which no doubt was what she wished. More than ever, she looked the victim of her circumstances. Roaring boys had invented a life for her, pressing her uneasily into adolescent fantasy. She did not belong there; she occupied a twilight of her own. She bowed before the brash cockiness of a clergyman who resembled a ball; for all her years in this place only her blue stockings had caught the eye as she crept meekly through the shadows cast by pedagogues. Did she, as she pondered in her flower beds, shuffle through her regrets, or wish she had her life over again? For a moment I wanted to say goodbye to her before hurrying off to celebrate the end of school in some more suitable way. But I was shy and didn't.

FORTY-THREE years went by and there, in the *Old Columban*, was her obituary. She died on July 5, 1989, in Toronto, to which city she had dutifully accompanied her husband, again to be a headmaster's wife. Describing her—no doubt truthfully, but even so a little oddly—as a "sad and lonely woman," her obituarist revealed a single startling fact. During her years in the Dublin mountains, she had become expert on matters pertaining to the turf, regularly attending race meetings.

No one had ever said the Warden's wife was good for a tip; no one had ever imagined her laying an on-course bet. She did not seek inside information from Cog Chapman, whose father had a stable. She did not speak of Gordon Richards or Charlie Smirke; nor Kinsale Girl at Punchestown, nor Golden Miller in his heyday. Yet this woman, who on the face of it had been smudged away to nothing, dwelt profitably on form among the callous prefects at High Table lunches, while her husband held forth about potatoes or recalled the day he met De Valera.

Forty-three years on, there is a woman who, obedient to the code of the times, never revealed her feelings about the humbug of so much that surrounded her, a woman who is clearly bored by married life and family life and the petty world of school, who is more mysterious than anyone had ever guessed. Grandstands and bets, bookies and tic-tac men mocked the paucity of our invention. Had she gone alone, even secretly, to race meetings? The pursed moral tone of her husband would hardly have permitted his habitual presence. Had she laughed silently at all of us? Would she have liked to be a racing-page seer, a Captain Crack or Your Old Reliable?

A finger, now, runs down the list of runners; a note is pencilled, chances weighed. *Next time out, Lovely Cottage. Rip van Winkle, surely pulled? Persian Gulf for place.* "Plagues on you according to your sins," warns the Senior Prefect in Chapel, smug as an old man. *Caughoo could do it if the going's soft.* In the drawing room, yet again, comes the information about Anne Boleyn's chest; attention is drawn to the watercolor allegedly by Turner. Tea is poured and sponge cake cut, the teacups passed about. Deaf in her solitude, the Warden's wife muses among gaudy silks enriched with hoops and diamonds, half-moons, and stars. Held-back wagers are placed, trainers offer a final word, and then the old-faced jockeys leap sprightly to the saddle. In the drawing room the precious metal pouch is declared once more to have been the repository of holy writings. In the drawing room there is the thunder of hooves. ◆

Former Memorial University president Dr. Leslie Harris has been appointed as the province's first Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commissioner.

Premier Clyde Wells and Justice Minister Ed Roberts made the announcement of Harris's appointment to the five-year term position at a news conference Wednesday.

"It's important that we have in that position someone whose judgment, integrity and incompetence is beyond question . . . We thought (Harris) could best fill that job for us," Wells told reporters.—*Saint John's (N. F.) Evening Telegram.*

Are beyond question.

ARTIST AT LARGE
BY EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

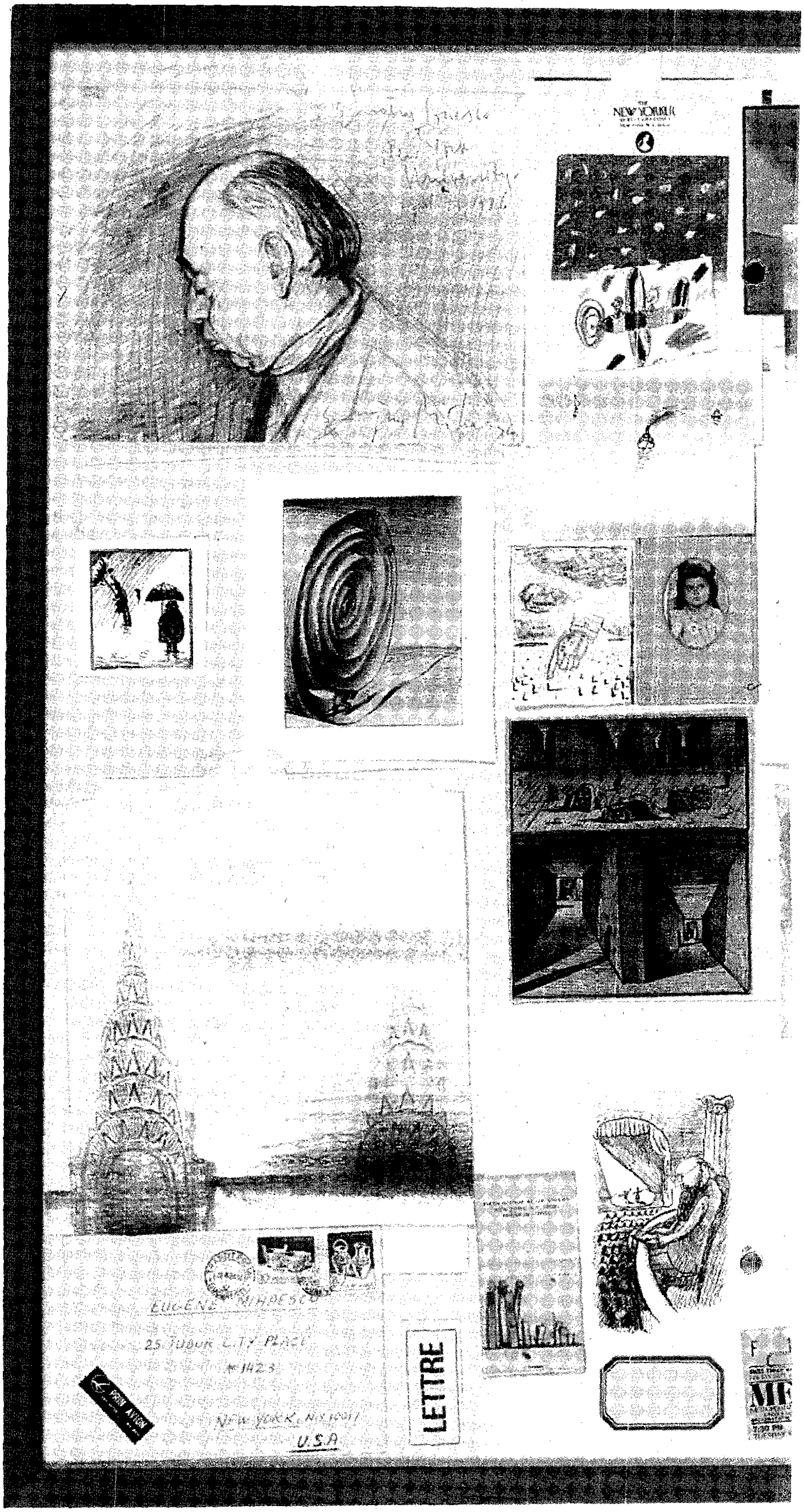
WALL OF MEMORIES

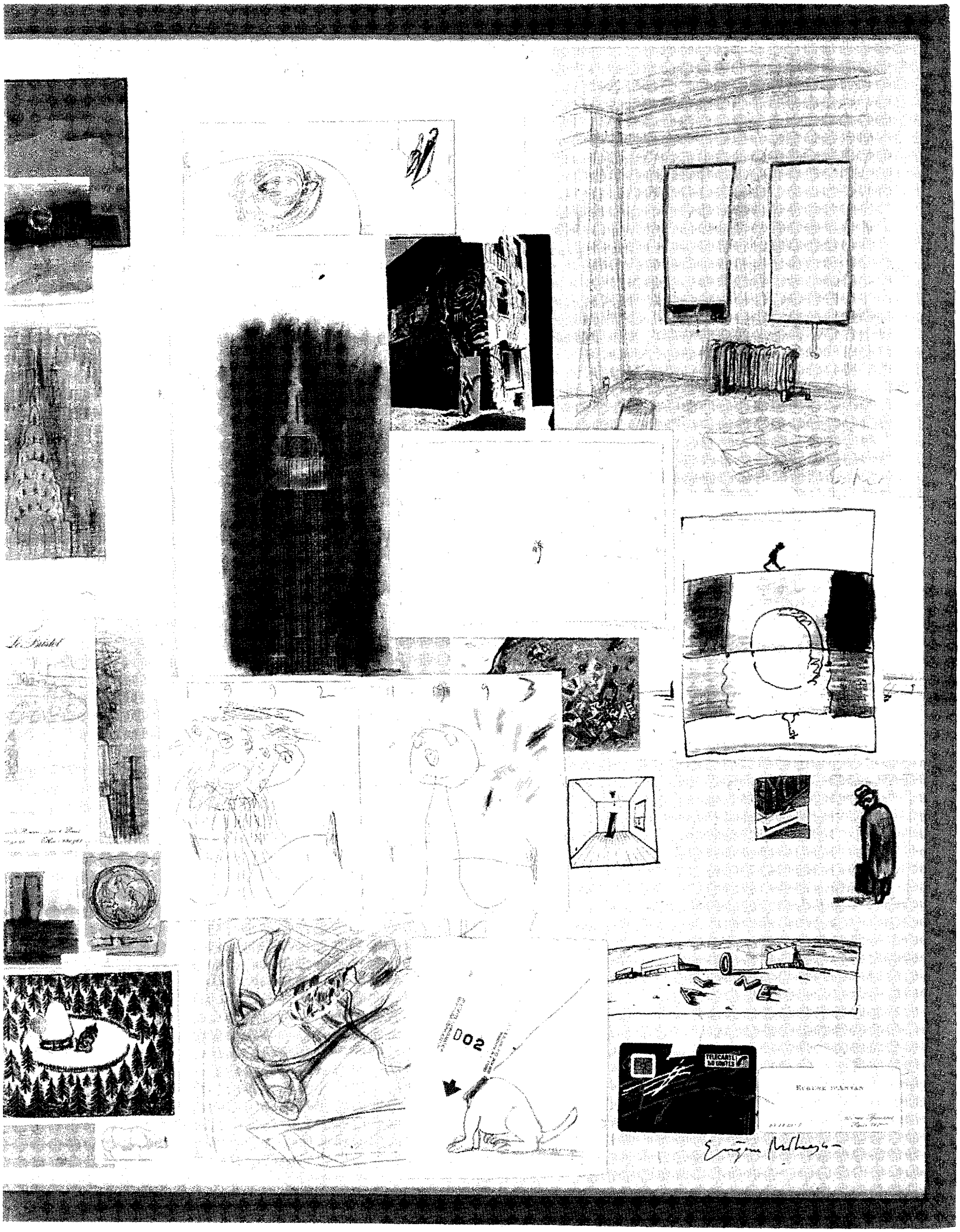
When I was two feet tall, a long time ago in Romania, I liked to pull drawers open and look inside them to see what was there. My mother used to tell me that if I was looking for yesterday it was already gone. Today, I am six feet three inches tall in America, and the drawer to my mind is ransacked daily. I like to keep an eye on the contents of the drawer by pinning them on my bulletin board. This board is the outermost layer of a thick wall of memories—dear, ephemeral scraps that have been patched one on top of another.

It's like a lost-and-found: a few sketches, an envelope, a matchbook, a blank label, a rhinoceros rubber stamp, a sketch of a critic at the Met, a portrait of Eugène Ionesco. This last is a life drawing that I scribbled at the Alliance Française in New York while Ionesco delivered a lecture identical to one I had heard him deliver somewhere before. The first work I did on the day I moved into my studio in Tudor City is here. The room was empty, so I spread the *Times* on the floor, sat on it, and sketched the windows just as they were that day—with the shades down, blocking my view of the East River.

I pin up the old, the new, and the still-in-progress. Here are my worn-out sneakers, the Empire State and Chrysler Buildings, a dog in line at Raffetto's on Houston Street. Flying lessons at Westhampton. A cup of Lapsang souchong, a tropical snowstorm. An idea for a *New Yorker* cover conceived over breakfast at Le Bristol in Paris. Homeless people on the Bowery.

I like best my prophetic version of the Romanian flag. I drilled a hole in the center to remove the Communist emblem—others accomplished this for me in fact in late 1989—and redesigned the banner as a golden bridge where a lonely man crosses from the red past into the blue future. And I often glance up at a used Paris telephone card with fifty units all talked out, together with the visiting card of one Eugène d'Antan. Who is he? He's me. ♦



002
TELECARTE
50 UNITES
Eugène Mihaesco

FICTION

THE JACK RANDA HOTEL

BY ALICE MUNRO

On the runway, in Honolulu, the plane loses speed, loses heart, falters, and veers onto the grass and bumps to a stop. A few yards, it seems, from the ocean. Inside, everybody laughs. First a hush, then the laugh. Gail laughed herself. Then there was a flurry of introductions all around.

Beside Gail are Larry and Phyllis, from Spokane.

Larry and Phyllis are going to a tournament of Left-handed Golfers, in Fiji, as are many other couples on this plane. It is Larry who is the Left-handed Golfer—Phyllis is the wife going along to watch and cheer and have fun.

They sit on the plane—Gail and the Left-handed Golfers—and lunch is served in picnic boxes. No drinks. Dreadful heat. Jokey and confusing announcements are made from the cockpit. *Sorry about the problem. Nothing serious, but it looks like it will keep us stewing here a while longer.* Phyllis has a terrible headache, which Larry tries to cure by applying finger pressure to points on her wrist and palm.

"It's not working," Phyllis says. "I could have been in New Orleans by now with Suzy."

Larry says, "Poor lamb."

Gail catches the fierce glitter of diamond rings as Phyllis pulls her hand away.

Wives have diamond rings and headaches, Gail thinks. They still do. The truly successful ones do. They have chubby husbands, left-handed golfers, bent on a lifelong course of appeasement.

Eventually the passengers who are not going to Fiji but on to Sydney are taken off the plane. They are led into the terminal and there are deserted by their airline guide. They wander about, retrieving their baggage and going through Customs, trying to locate the airline that is supposed to honor their tickets. At one point, they are accosted by a welcoming committee from one of the island's hotels, who will not stop singing Hawaiian songs and flinging garlands around their necks. But they find themselves on another plane at last, and they eat and drink and sleep, and the lines to the toilets lengthen and the aisles fill up with debris and the flight attendants hide in their cubbyholes chatting about children and boyfriends. Then comes the unsettling bright morning and the yellow-sanded coast of Australia far below, and the wrong time of day, and even the best-dressed, best-looking passengers are haggard and unwilling, torpid, as from a long trip in steerage. And before they can leave the plane there is one more assault. Hairy men in shorts swarm aboard and spray everything with insecticide.

"So maybe this is the way it will be getting into Heaven," Gail imagines herself saying to Will. "People will fling flowers on you that you don't want, and everybody will have headaches and be constipated and then you will have to be sprayed for Earth germs."

This is her old habit—trying to think of clever and lighthearted things to say to Will.

After Will went away, it seemed to Gail that her shop was filling up with women. Not necessarily buying clothes. She didn't mind this. It was like the long-ago days, before Will. Women were sitting around in the ancient armchairs beside Gail's ironing board and cutting table, behind the faded batik curtains, drinking coffee. Gail started grinding the coffee beans herself, as she used to do. The dressmaker's dummy was soon draped with beads and had a scattering of scandalous graffiti. Stories were told about men, usually about men who had left. Lies and injustices and confrontations. Betrayals so horrific—yet so trite—that you could only rock with laughter when you heard about them. Men made fatuous speeches (*I am sorry, but I no longer feel committed to this marriage*), they offered to sell back to the wives cars and furniture that the wives themselves had paid for. They capered about in self-satisfaction because they had managed to impregnate some dewy dollop of womanhood younger than their own children. They were fiendish and childish. What could you do but give up on them? In all honor, in pride, and for your own protection?

Gail's enjoyment of all this palled rather quickly. Too much coffee could make your skin look livery. An underground quarrel developed among the women when it turned out that one of them had placed an ad in the Personal Column. Gail shifted from coffee with friends to drinks with Cleata, Will's mother. As she did this, oddly enough, her spirits grew more sober. Some giddiness still showed in the notes she pinned to her door so she could get away early on summer afternoons. (Her clerk Donalda was on her holiday, and it was too much trouble to hire anybody else.)

Gone to the Opera.

Gone to the Funny Farm.

Gone to stock up on Sackcloth and Ashes.

Actually, these were not her own inventions but things Will used to write out and tape on her door in the early days, when they wanted to go upstairs.

She heard that such flippancy was not appreciated by people who had driven some distance to buy a dress for a wedding, or girls on an expedition to buy clothes for college. She did not care.

On Cleata's veranda Gail was soothed. She became vaguely hopeful. Like most serious drinkers, Cleata stuck to one drink—hers was Scotch—and seemed amused by variations. But she would make Gail a gin-and-tonic, a white-rum-and-soda. She introduced her to tequila. "This is heaven," Gail sometimes said, meaning not just the drink but the screened veranda and hedged back yard, the old house behind them with its shuttered windows, varnished floors, inconveniently high kitchen cupboards, and out-of-date flowered curtains. (Cleata despised decorating.) This was the house where Will, and Cleata, too, had been born, and when Will first brought Gail into it she had thought, This is how really civilized people live. The carelessness and propriety combined, the respect for old books and old dishes. The absurd things that Will and Cleata thought it natural to talk about. And the things they didn't talk about. In Cleata's house, even now, Gail knows that she is not supposed to mention Will's present defection, or the illness that has made Cleata's arms and legs look like varnished twigs within their deep tan, and has hollowed the cheeks framed by her looped-back white hair. She and Will have the same slightly monkeyish face, with dreamy, mocking dark eyes.

WHEN she met Will and Cleata, Gail thought they were like characters in a book. A son living with his mother, apparently contentedly, into middle age. Gail saw a life that was ceremonious and enviable, with at least the appearance of celibate grace and safety. She still sees some of that, though the truth is complicated. Will had not always lived at home, and he is neither celibate nor discreetly homosexual. He had been gone for years, into his own life—working for the National Film Board in Montreal and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto—and had given that up only recently when Gail met him, to come back to Walley and be a teacher. What made him give it up? This and that, he had said. Machiavellis here and there. Empire building. Exhaustion.

Gail came to Walley one summer in the seventies. The boyfriend she was with then was a boatbuilder, and she sold clothes that she had made—capes with appliqués, shirts with billowing sleeves, long, bright skirts. She got space in the back of the craft shop, when winter came on. She learned about importing ponchos and thick socks from Bolivia and Guatemala. She found local women to knit sweaters. One day Will stopped her on the street and asked her to help him with the costumes for the play he was putting on—"The Skin of Our Teeth." Her boyfriend had moved to Vancouver.

She told Will some things about herself early on, in case he should think that with her capable build and pink skin and wide gentle forehead she was exactly the kind of woman to start a family on. She told him that she had had a baby, and that when she and her boyfriend were moving some furniture in a borrowed van, from Thunder Bay to Toronto, carbon-monoxide fumes had leaked in, just enough to make them feel sick but enough to kill the baby, who was seven weeks old. After that Gail got an infection. She decided she did not want to have another child, and it would have been difficult anyway, so she had a hysterectomy.

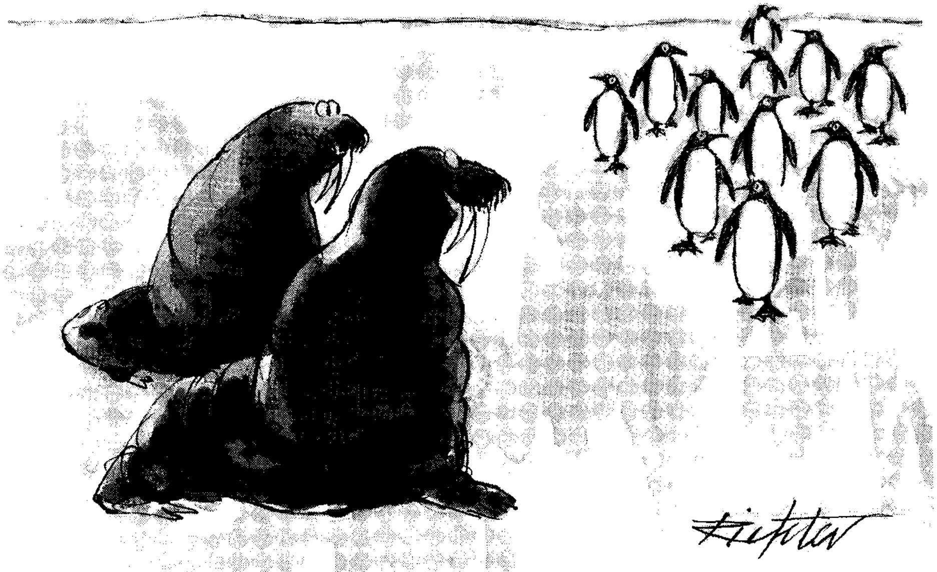
Will admired her. He said so. He did not feel obliged to say, What a tragedy! He did not even obliquely suggest that the death was the result of choices Gail had made. He was entranced with her then. He thought her brave and generous and resourceful and gifted. The costumes she designed and made for him were perfect, miraculous. Gail thought that his view of her, of her life, showed a touching innocence. It seemed to her that far from being a free and generous spirit she had often been anxious and desperate and had spent most of the time doing laundry and worrying about money and feeling she owed a lot to any man who took up with her. She did not think she was in love with Will then, but she liked his looks—his energetic body, so upright it seemed taller than it was, his flung-back head, shiny high forehead, springy ruff of graying hair. She liked to watch him at rehearsals, or just talking to his students. How skilled and intrepid he seemed as a director, how potent a personality as he walked the high-school halls or the streets of Walley. And then the slightly quaint, admiring feelings he had for her, his courtesy as a lover, the foreign pleasantness of his house and his life with Cleata—all this made Gail feel like somebody getting a unique welcome in a place where perhaps she did not truly have a right to be. That did not matter then—she had the upper hand.

So, when did she stop having it? When he got used to sleeping with her, when they moved in together, when they did so much work on the cottage by the river and it turned out that she was better at that kind of work than he was?

Was she a person who believed that somebody had to have the upper hand?

There came a time when just the tone of his voice, saying "Your shoelace is undone" as she went ahead of him on a walk—just that—could fill her with despair, warning her that they had crossed over into a bleak country where his disappointment in her was boundless, his contempt impossible to challenge. She would lose control eventually, break out in a rage—they would have days and nights of fierce hopelessness. Then the breakthrough, the sweet reunion, the jokes, and bewildered relief. So it went on in their life, she couldn't really understand it or tell if it was like anybody else's. But the peaceful periods seemed to be getting longer, the dangers retreating, and she had no inkling that he was waiting to meet somebody like this new person, Sandy, who could seem to him as alien and delightful as Gail herself had once been.

Will probably had no inkling of that, either. He had never had much to say about Sandy—*Sandra*—who had come to Walley from Australia last year on an exchange program, to see how drama was being taught in Canadian schools. He had said she was a Young



"Here come the suits."

INDUSTRIAL LACE

The city had such pretty clotheslines.
Women aired their intimate apparel

in the emery haze:
membranes of lingerie—
pearl, ruby, copper slips—
their somehow intestinal quivering in the wind.

And Freihofer's spread the chaste, apron scent
of baking, a sensual net
over a few yards of North Troy.

The city had Niagara
Mohawk bearing down with power and light
and members of the Local
shifting on the line.

They worked on fabrics made from wood and acid,
synthetics that won't vent.

They pieced the tropics into housecoats
when big prints were the rage.
Dacron gardens twisted on the line

over lots of Queen Anne's lace.
Sack dresses dyed the sun
as sun passed through, making a brash stained glass
against the leading of the tenements,

the warehouse holding medical supplies.
I waited for my bus by that window of trusses

in Caucasian beige, trying to forget
the pathological inside.
I was thinking of being alive.

I was waiting to open
the amber envelopes of mail at home.
Just as food-service workers, counterwomen,
maybe my Aunt Fran, waited to undo
their perms from the delicate insect meshes
required by the Board of Health.

Aunt Alice wasn't on this route.
She made brushes and plastics at Tek Hughes—
milk crates of orange
industrial lace
the cartons could drip through.

Once we boarded, the girls from Behr-Manning
put their veins up
and sawed their nails to dust
on files from the plant.
All day, they made abrasives. Garnet paper.
Yes, and rags covered with crushed gems called
garnet cloth.

It was dusk—when aunts and mothers formed
their larval curls
and wrapped their heads in thick brown webs.

It was yesterday—twenty years after
my father's death,
I found something he had kept.
A packet of lightning-

cut sanding disks, still sealed.
I guess he meant to open the finish,
strip the paint stalled on some grain,
and groom the primal gold.

The disks are the rough size
of those cookies the franchises call Homestyle
and label Best Before.

The old cellophane was tough.
But I ripped until I touched

their harsh done crust.

—ALICE FULTON

Turk. Then he had said she mightn't even have heard of that expression. Very soon, there had developed some sort of electricity, or danger, around her name. Gail got some information from other sources. She heard that Sandy had challenged Will, in front of his class. Sandy had said that the plays he wanted to do were not relevant. Or maybe she said that they were not revolutionary.

"But he likes her," one of his students said. "Oh, yeah, he *really likes* her."

Sandy didn't stay around long. She went on to observe the teaching of drama in other schools. But she wrote to Will, and presumably he wrote back. For it turned out that they had fallen in love. Will and Sandy had fallen seriously in love, and at the end of the school year, when Sandy had to go home, Will went with her.

He and Gail agreed not to correspond. Perhaps later, Will said. Gail said, "Suit yourself."

But one day at Cleata's house Gail saw his writing on an envelope that must have been left out, on purpose, where she could see it. Cleata must have left it there—Cleata who never spoke one word about the fugitives. Gail wrote down the return address—16 Eyre Rd., Toowong, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

It was when she saw Will's writing that she understood how useless everything had become to her. This barefronted pre-Victorian house in Walley, and the veranda, and the drinks, and the catalpa tree that she was always looking at, in Cleata's back yard. All the trees and streets in Walley, all the liberating views of the lake, and the comfort of the shop. Useless, cutouts, fakes, and props.

The real scene was hidden from her, in Australia.

That was why she found herself sitting on the plane, beside the woman with the diamond rings. Her own hands have no rings on them, no polish on the nails. The skin is dry from all the work she does with cloth. She used to call the clothes she made "handcrafted" until Will made her embarrassed about that description. She still doesn't quite see what was wrong.

She has sold the shop, she has sold it to Donalda, who has been wanting to buy it for a long time. Gail has taken the money, and she has got herself onto a flight to Australia and has not told anyone where she is going. She has lied, talking about a long holiday that would start off in England. Then somewhere in Greece for the winter, then who knows?

Last night she did a transformation on herself. She cut off her heavy, reddish-gray hair and put a dark-brown rinse on what was left of it. The color that resulted was strange—a deep maroon, obviously artificial but rather too sombre for any attempt at glamour. She picked out from her shop—even though the contents no longer belonged to her—a dress of a kind she would never usually wear, a jacket-dress of dark-blue linen-look polyester with lightning stripes of red and yellow. She is tall, and broad in the hips, and she usually wears things that are loose and graceful. This outfit gives her chunky shoulders and cuts her legs at an unflattering spot above the knees. What sort of woman did she think she was making herself into? The sort that a woman like Phyllis would play bridge with? If so, she has got it wrong. She has come out looking like somebody who has spent most of her life in uniform, at some worthy poorly paid job (perhaps in a hospital cafeteria?) and now has spent too much money for a dashing dress that will turn out to be inappropriate and uncomfortable, on the holiday of her life.

That doesn't matter. It is a disguise.

In the airport washroom, on a new continent, she sees that the dark hair coloring, insufficiently rinsed out the night before, has mixed with her sweat and is trickling down her neck.

Gail has landed in Brisbane, still not used to what time of day it is, and persecuted by so hot a sun. She is wearing her horrid dress but she has scrubbed her neck, so the stain no longer shows.

She has taken a taxi. Tired as she is, she cannot settle, cannot rest until she has seen where they live. She has already bought a map and found Eyre Road. A short, curving street. She asks to be let out at the corner, where there is a little grocery store. This is the place where they buy their milk, most likely, or other things that they may have run out of. Detergent, aspirin, tampons.

The fact that Gail never met Sandy was of course an ominous thing. It must have meant that Will knew, very quickly, how the tide would turn. Later attempts to ferret out a description did not yield much. Tall rather than short. Thin rather than fat. Fair rather than dark. Gail had a mental picture of one of those long-legged, short-haired, energetic, and boyishly attractive girls. *Women.* But she wouldn't know Sandy if she ran into her.

Would anybody know Gail? With her dark glasses and her unlikely hair, she feels so altered as to be invisible. It's also being in a strange country which has transformed her. She's not tuned into it yet. Once she gets tuned in, she may not be able to do the bold things she can do now. She has to walk this street, look at the house right away, or she may not be able to do it at all.

The road that the taxi climbed was steep, up from the brown river. Eyre Road runs along a ridge. There is no sidewalk, just a dusty path. No one walking, no cars passing, no shade. Fences of boards or a kind of basket weaving—wattles?—or in some cases high hedges covered with flowers. No, the flowers are really leaves, purplish-pink or crimson in color. Trees unfamiliar to Gail are showing over the fences. They have tough-looking, dusty foliage, scaly or stringy bark, a shabby, ornamental air. An indifference or vague ill will about them, which she associates with the tropics.

Walking on the path ahead of her are a pair of guinea hens, stately and preposterous.

The house where Will and Sandy live is hidden by a board fence, painted a pale green. Gail's heart shrinks, her heart is in a cruel clutch, to see that fence, that green.

The road is a dead end, so she has to turn around. She walks past the house again. In the fence there are gates to let a car in and out. There is also a mail slot. She noticed one of these before, in a fence in front of another house, and the reason she noticed it was that there was a magazine sticking out. So the mailbox is not very deep, and a hand, slipping in, might be able to find an envelope resting on its edge. If the mail has not been taken out yet, by a person in the house. Gail does slip a hand in, and finds a letter there, just as she had thought she might. She puts the letter into her purse. Why does she do this? Just to find out anything about them. Even if it's only what they owe on their phone bill. Anything at all.

She calls a taxi from the shop at the corner of the street. "What part of the States are you from?" the man in the shop asks her.

"Texas," she says. She has an idea that they would like you to be from Texas, and indeed the man lifts his eyebrows, whistles.

"I thought so," he says.

It is Will's own writing, on the envelope. Not a letter to Will, then, but a letter from him. A letter he has sent to Ms. Catherine Thornaby, 491 Hawtre Street. Also in Brisbane. Another hand has scrawled across it, "Return to Sender, Died Sept. 13." For a moment, in her disordered state of mind, Gail thinks that this means Will has died.

She has got to calm down and collect herself, stay out of the sun for a bit.

Nevertheless, as soon as she has read the letter in her hotel room, and has tidied herself up, she takes another taxi, this time to Hawtre Street, and finds, as she expected, a sign in the window. "Flat to Let."

But what is in the letter that Will has written to Ms. Catherine Thornaby, on Hawtre Street?

Dear Ms. Thornaby,

You do not know me, but I hope that once I have explained myself, we may meet and talk. I believe that I may be a Canadian cousin of yours, my grandfather having come to Canada from Northumberland sometime in the 1870's, about the same time as a brother of his went to Australia. My grandfather's name was William, like my own, his brother's name was Thomas. Of course I have no proof that you are descended from this Thomas. I simply looked in the Brisbane phone book and was delighted to find there a Thornaby spelled in the same way. I used to think this family-tracing business was the silliest, most boring thing imaginable but now that I find myself doing it, I discover there is a strange excitement about it. Perhaps it is my age—I am 56—that urges me to find connections. And I have more time on my hands than I am used to. My wife is working with a theatre here which keeps her busy till all hours. She is a very bright and energetic young woman (she scolds me if I refer to any female over 18 as a girl and she is all of 28!). I taught drama in a Canadian high school but I have not yet found any work in Australia.

Wife. He is trying to be respectable in the eyes of the possible cousin.

DEAR MR. THORNABY,

The name we share may be a more common one than you suppose, though I am at present its only representative in the Brisbane phone book. You may not know that the name comes from Thorn Abbey, the ruins of which are still to be seen in Northumberland. The spelling varies—Thornaby, Thornby, Thornabbey, Thornabby. In the Middle Ages the name of the Lord of the Manor would be taken as a surname by all the people working on the estate, including laborers, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc. As a result there are many people scattered around the world bearing a name that in the strict sense they have no right to. Only those who can trace their descent from the family in the twelfth century are the true, armigerous Thornabys. That is, they have the right to display the family coat of arms. I am one of these Thornabys and since you do not mention anything about the coat of arms and do not trace your ancestry back beyond this William I assume that you are not. My grandfather's name was Jonathan.

Gail writes this on an old portable typewriter that she has bought from the secondhand shop down the street. By this time she is living at 491 Hawtre Street, in an apartment building called the Miramar. It is a two-story building covered with dingy cream stucco, with twisted pillars on either side of a grilled entryway. It has a perfunctory Moorish or Spanish or Californian air, like that of an old movie theatre. The manager told her that the flat was very modern.

"An elderly lady had it, but she had to go to the hospital. Then somebody came when she died and got her effects out, but it still has the basic furniture that goes with the flat. What part of the States are you from?"

Oklahoma, Gail said. Mrs. Massie, from Oklahoma.

The manager looks to be about seventy years old. He wears glasses that magnify his eyes, and walks quickly, but rather unsteadily, tilting forward. He speaks of difficulties—the increase of the foreign element in the population, which makes it hard to find good repairmen, the carelessness of certain tenants, malicious acts of passersby who continually litter the grass. Gail asks if he has put in a notice, yet, to the post office. He says he has been intending to, but the lady received hardly any mail. Except one letter came. It was a strange thing that it came right the day after she died. He sent it back.

"I'll do it," Gail says. "I'll tell the post office."

"I'll have to sign it, though. Get me one of those forms they have, and I'll sign it, and you can give it in. I'd be obliged."

The walls of the apartment are painted white—this must be what is modern about it. It has bamboo blinds, a tiny kitchen, a green sofa bed, a table, a dresser, and two chairs. On the wall one picture, which might have been a painting or a tinted photograph. A yellowish-green desert landscape, with rocks and bunches of sage, and dim, distant mountains. Gail is sure that she has seen this before.

She paid the rent in cash. She had to be busy for a while, buying sheets and towels and groceries, a few pots and dishes, the typewriter. She had to open a bank account, become a person living in the country, not a traveller. There are shops hardly a block away. A grocery store, the secondhand store, a drugstore, a tea shop. They are all humble establishments with strips of colored paper hanging in the doorways, wooden awnings over the sidewalk in front. Their offerings are limited. The tea shop has only two tables, the secondhand store contains scarcely more than the tumbled-out accumulation of one ordinary house. The cereal boxes in the grocery store, the bottles of cough syrup and packets of pills in the drugstore, are set out singly on the shelves, as if they were of special value or significance.

But she has found what she needs. In the secondhand store she found some loose flowered-cotton dresses, a straw bag for her groceries. Now she looks like the other women she sees on the street. Housewives, middle-aged, with bare but pale arms and legs, shopping in the early morning or late afternoon. She bought a floppy straw hat, too, to shade her face, as they do. Dim, soft, freckly, blinking faces.

Night comes suddenly around six o'clock, and she must find occupation for the evenings. There is no television in the apartment. But a little beyond the shops there is a lending library, run by an old woman out of the front room of her house. This woman wears a hairnet, and gray lisle stockings—in spite of the heat. (Where, nowadays, can you find gray lisle stockings?) She has an undernourished body and colorless, tight, unsmiling lips. She is the person Gail calls to mind when she writes the letter from Catherine Thornaby. She thinks of this library woman by that name whenever she sees her—which is almost every day, because you are allowed only one book at a time and Gail usually reads a book a night. She thinks, There is Catherine Thornaby, dead and moved into a new existence a few blocks away.

All the business about armigerous and nonarmigerous Thornabys came out of a book. Not one of the books that Gail is reading now but one she read in her youth. The hero was the nonarmigerous but deserving heir to a great property. She cannot remember the title. She lived with people then who were always reading "Steppenwolf" or "Dune" or something by Krishnamurti, and she read historical romances apologetically. She did not think Will would have read such a book or picked up this sort of information.

And she is sure that he will have to reply, to tell Catherine off.

She waits, and reads the books from the lending library, which seem to come from an even earlier time than those romances she read twenty years ago. Some of them she took out of the public library in Winnipeg, before she left home, and they seemed old-fashioned even then. "The Girl of the Limberlost." "The Blue Castle." "Maria Chapdelaine." Such books remind her, naturally, of her life before Will. There was such a life, and she could still salvage something from it, if she wanted to. She has a sister living in Winnipeg. She has an aunt there, in a nursing home, who still reads books in Russian. Gail's grandparents came from Russia, her parents could still speak Russian, her real name is not Gail but Galya. She cut herself off from her family—or they cut her off—when she left home at eighteen to wander about the country, as you did in those days. First with friends, then with a boyfriend, then with another boyfriend. She strung beads and tie-dyed scarves and sold them on the street.

* * *

DEAR MS. THORNABY,

I must thank you for enlightening me as to the important distinction between the armigerous and the nonarmigerous Thornabys. I gather that you have a strong suspicion that I may turn out to be one of the latter. I beg your pardon—I had no intention of treading on such sacred ground or of wearing the Thornaby coat of arms on my T-shirt. We do not take much account of such things in my country and I did not think you did so in Australia, but I see that I am mistaken. Perhaps you are too far on in years to have noticed the change in values. It is quite different with me, since I have been in the teaching profession and am constantly brought up, as well, against the energetic arguments of a young wife.

My innocent intention was simply to get in touch with somebody in this country outside the theatrical-academic circle that my wife and I seem to be absorbed in. I have a mother in Canada, whom I miss. In fact your letter reminded me of her a little. She would be capable of writing such a letter for a joke but I doubt whether you are joking. It sounds like a case of Exalted Ancestry to me.

When he is offended and disturbed in a certain way—a way that is hard to predict and hard for most people to recognize—Will becomes heavily sarcastic. Irony deserts him. He flails about, and the effect is to make people embarrassed—not for themselves, as he intends, but for him. This happens seldom, and usually when it happens it means that he feels deeply unappreciated. It means that he has even stopped appreciating himself.

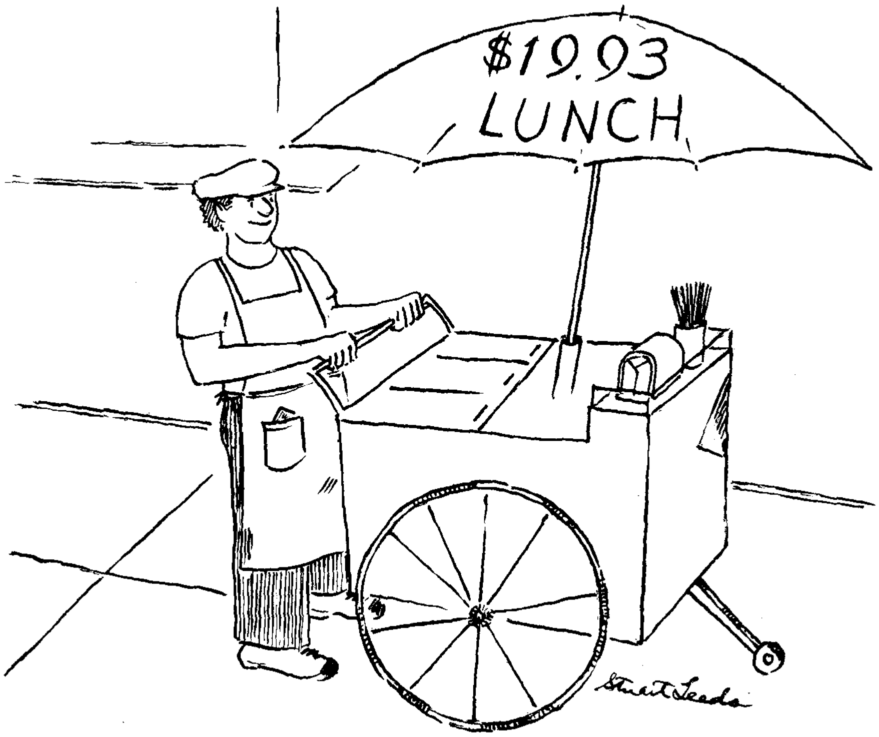
So that is what happened. Gail thinks so. Sandy and her young friends, with their stormy confidence, their crude righteousness, might be making him miserable. His wit not taken notice of, his enthusiasm dismissed as out-of-date. No way of making himself felt among them. His pride in being attached to Sandy going gradually sour.

She thinks so. He is shaky and unhappy and casting about to know somebody else. He has thought of family ties, here in this country of non-stop blooming and impudent bird life and searing days and suddenly clamped-down nights.

DEAR MR. THORNABY,

Did you really expect me, just because I have the same surname as you, to fling open my door and put out the "welcome mat"—as I think you say in America, and that inevitably includes Canada? You may be looking for another mother here, but that hardly obliges me to be one. By the way you are quite wrong about my age—I am younger than you by several years, so do not picture me as an elderly spinster in a hairnet with gray lisle stockings. I know the world probably as well as you do. I travel a good deal, being a fashion buyer for a large store. So my ideas are not so out-of-date as you suppose.

You do not say whether your busy energetic young wife was to be a part of this familial friendship. I am surprised you feel the need for other contacts. It seems I am always reading or hearing on the media about these "May-December" relationships and how invigorating they are and how happily the men are settling down to domesticity and parenthood. (No mention of the 'trial runs' with women closer to their own age or mention of how those women are settling down to their lives of loneliness!) So perhaps you need to become a papa to give you a "sense of family"!



Gail is surprised at how fluently she writes. She has always found it hard to write letters, and the results have been dull and sketchy, with many dashes and incomplete sentences and pleas of insufficient time. Where has she got this fine, nasty style—out of some book, like the armigerous nonsense? She goes out in the dark to post her letter, feeling bold and satisfied. But she wakes up early the next morning, thinking that she has certainly gone too far. He will never answer that, she will never hear from him again.

She gets up and leaves the building, goes for a morning walk. The shops are still shut up, the broken venetian blinds are closed, as well as they can be, in the windows of the front-room library. She walks as far as the river, where there is a strip of park beside a hotel. Later in the day she could not walk or sit there, because the verandas of the hotel were always crowded with uproarious beer drinkers, and the park was within their verbal or even bottle-throwing range. Now the verandas are empty, the doors are closed, and she walks in under the trees. The brown water of the river spreads sluggishly among the mangrove stumps. Birds are flying over the water, lighting on the hotel roof. They are not seagulls, as she thought at first. They are smaller than gulls, their throats and breasts are pink, and their bright gray wings are touched with pink, too.

In the park two men are sitting—one on a bench, one beside the bench in a wheelchair. She recognizes them—they live in her building, and go for walks every day. Once, she held the grille open for them to pass through. She has seen them at the shops, and sitting at the table in the tearoom window. The man in the wheelchair looks quite old and ill. His face is puckered like blistered paint. He wears dark glasses and a coal-black toupee and a black beret over that. He is all wrapped up in a blanket. Even later in the day, when the sun is hot—every time she has seen them—he has been wrapped in this plaid blanket. The man who pushes the wheelchair and who now sits on the bench is young enough to look like an overgrown boy. He is tall and large-limbed but not manly. A young giant, bewildered by his own extent. Strong but not athletic, with a stiffness, maybe of timidity, in his thick arms and legs and neck. Red hair not just on his head but on his bare arms and above the buttons of his shirt.

Gail halts in her walk past them. She says good morning. The young man answers almost inaudibly. It seems to be his habit to look out at the world with majestic indifference, but she thinks her greeting has given him a twitch of embarrassment or apprehension. Nevertheless, she speaks again. She says, "What are those birds I see everywhere?"

"Galah birds," the young man says,

making the first word sound something like her childhood name. She is going to ask him to repeat it, when the old man bursts out in what seems like a string of curses. The words are knotted and incomprehensible to her, because of the Australian accent on top of some European accent, but the concentrated viciousness is beyond any doubt. And these words are meant for her—he is leaning forward, in fact struggling to free himself from the straps that hold him in. He wants to leap at her, lunge at her, chase her out of sight. The young man makes no apology and does not take any notice of Gail but leans toward the old man and gently pushes him back, saying things to him which she cannot hear. She sees that there will be no explanation. She walks away.

For ten days, no letter. No word. She cannot think what to do. She walks every day. That is mostly what she does. The Miramar is only a mile or so away from Will's street. She never walks in that street again or goes into the shop where she told the man that she was from Texas. She cannot imagine how she could have been so bold, the first day. She does walk in the streets nearby. Those streets all go along ridges. In between the ridges, which the houses cling to, there are steep-sided gullies full of birds and trees. Even as the sun grows hot, those birds are not quiet. Magpies keep up their disturbing conversation and sometimes emerge to make menacing flights at her light-colored hat. The birds with the name like her own cry out foolishly, as they rise and whirl about and subside into the leaves. She walks till she is dazed and sweaty and afraid of sunstroke. She shivers in the heat—most fearful, most desirous, of seeing Will's utterly familiar figure, that one rather small and jaunty, free-striding package of all that could pain or appease her in the world.

Dear Mr. Thornaby,

This is just a short note to beg your pardon, if I was impolite and hasty in my replies to you, as I am sure I was. I have been under some stress lately, and have taken a leave of absence to recuperate. Under these circumstances one does not always behave as well as one would hope, or see things as rationally. . . .

One day she walks past the hotel and the park. The verandas are clamorous with the afternoon drinking. All the trees in the park have come out in bloom. The flowers are a color that she has seen and could not have imagined on trees before—a shade of silvery-blue, or silvery-purple, so delicate and beautiful that you would think it would shock everything into quietness, into contemplation, but apparently it has not.

When she gets back to the Miramar she finds the young man with red hair standing in the downstairs hall, outside the door of the apartment where he lives with the old man. From behind the closed apartment door come the sounds of a tirade.

The young man smiles at her this time. She stops, and they stand together, listening.

Gail says, "If you would ever like a place to sit down while you're waiting, you know you're welcome to come upstairs."

He shakes his head, still smiling, as if this were a joke between them. She thinks she should say something else before she leaves him there, so she asks him about the trees in the park.

"Those trees beside the hotel?" she says. "Where I saw you the other morning? They are all out in bloom now. What are they called?"

He says a word she cannot catch. She asks him to repeat it. "Jack Randa," he says. "That's the Jack Randa Hotel."

Dear Ms. Thornaby,

I have been away, and when I came back I found both your letters waiting for me. I opened them in the wrong order, though that really doesn't matter.

My mother has died. I have been "home" to Canada for her funeral. It is cold there, autumn. Many things have changed. Why I should want to tell you this I simply do not know. We have certainly got off on the wrong track with each other. Even if I had not got your note of explanation after the first letter you wrote, I think I would have been glad in a peculiar way to get the first letter. I wrote you a very snippy and unpleasant letter and you wrote me back one of the same. The snippiness and unpleasantness and readiness to take offense seems somehow familiar to me. Ought I to risk your armigerous wrath by suggesting that we may be related after all?

I feel adrift here. I admire my wife and her friends so much. I admire their zeal and directness and commitment, their hope of using their talents to create a better world. (I must say though that it often seems to me that the hope and zeal exceed the talents.) I cannot be one of them. I must say that they saw this before I did. It must be because I am woozy with jet lag after that horrendous flight that I can face up to this fact and that I write it down in a letter to someone like you who has her own troubles and quite correctly has indicated she doesn't want to be bothered with mine. I had better close, in fact, before I burden you with further claptrap from my psyche. I wouldn't blame you if you had stopped reading before you got this far. . . .

Gail lies on the sofa pressing this letter with both hands against her stomach. Many things are changed. He has been in Walley, then—he has been told how she sold the shop and started out on her great world trip.

But wouldn't he have heard that anyway, from Cleata? Maybe not. Cleata was closemouthed. And when she went into the hospital, just before Gail left, she said, "I don't want to see or hear from anybody for a while. These treatments are bound to be a bit bizarre."

Cleata is dead.

Gail knew that Cleata would die, but somehow thought that everything would hold still, nothing could really happen there, while she, Gail, remained here.

Cleata is dead and Will is alone except for Sandy, and Sandy perhaps has stopped being of much use to him.

There is a knock on the door. Gail jumps up in a great disturbance, looking for a scarf to cover her hair.

It is the manager, calling her false name.

"I just wanted to tell you I had somebody here asking questions. He asked me about Miss Thornaby and I said, Oh, she's dead. She's been dead for some time now. He said, Oh, has she? I said, Yes, she has, and he said, Well, that's strange."

"Did he say why?" Gail says, "Did he say why it was strange?"

"No. I said, She died in the hospital and I've got an American lady in the flat now. I forgot where you told me you came from. He sounded like an American himself, so it might've meant something to him. I said there was a letter come for her after she was dead, did you write that letter? I told him I sent it back. Yes, he said, I wrote it, but I never got it back. There must be some kind of mistake, he said."

Gail says there must be. "Like a mistaken identity," she says.

"Yes. Like that."

Dear Ms. Thornaby,

It has come to my attention that you are dead. I know that life is strange, but I have never found it quite this strange before. Who are you and what is going on? It seems this rigmarole about the Thornabys must have been just that—a rigmarole. You must cer-

> tainly be a person with time on your hands and a fantasizing turn of mind. I resent being taken in, but I suppose I understand the temptation. I do think you owe me an explanation now as to whether or not *my* explanation is true and this is some joke. Or am I dealing with some "fashion buyer" from beyond the grave? (Where did you get that touch or is it the truth?)

WHEN Gail goes out to buy food, she uses the back door of the building, she takes a roundabout route to the shops.

On her return by the same back-door route she comes upon the young red-haired man standing between the dustbins. If he had not been so tall you might have said that he was hidden there. She speaks to him but he doesn't answer. He looks at her through tears, as if the tears were nothing but a wavy glass, something usual.

"Is your father sick?" Gail says to him. She has decided that this must be the relationship, though the age gap seems greater than usual between father and son and the two of them are quite unalike in looks, and the young man's patience and fidelity are so far beyond—nowadays they seem even contrary to—anything a son customarily shows. But they go beyond anything a hired attendant might show, as well.

"No," the young man says, and though his expression stays calm a drowning flush spreads over his face, under the delicate redhead's skin.

Lovers, Gail thinks. She is suddenly sure of it. She feels a desperate pity.

Lovers.

She goes down to her mailbox after dark and finds there another letter.

> I might have thought that you were out of town on one of your fashion-buying jaunts, but the manager tells me you have not been away since taking the flat, so I must suppose your "leave of absence" continues. He tells me also that you are a brunette. I suppose we might exchange descriptions—and then, with trepidation, photographs—in the brutal manner of people meeting through newspaper ads. It seems that in my attempt to get to know you I am willing to make quite a fool of myself. Nothing new of course in that. . . .

Gail does not leave the apartment for two days. She does without milk, drinks her coffee black. What will she do when she runs out of coffee? She eats odd meals—tuna fish spread on crackers when she has no bread to make a sandwich, a dry end of cheese, a couple of mangoes. She goes out into the upstairs hall of the Miramar—first opening the door a crack, testing the air for an occupant—and walks to the arched window that overlooks the street. And from long ago a feeling comes back to her—the feeling of watching a street, the visible bit of a street, where a car is expected to appear, or may appear, or may not appear. She even remembers now the cars themselves—a blue Austin mini, a maroon Chevrolet, a family station wagon. Cars in which she travelled short distances, in a bold daze of consent. Long before Will.

She doesn't know what clothes Will will be wearing, or how his hair is cut, or if he will have some change in his walk or expression, some change appropriate to his life here.

He cannot have changed more than she has. She has no mirror in the apartment except the little one on the bathroom cupboard, but even that can tell her how much thinner she has got and how the skin of her face has toughened. Instead of fading and wrinkling as fair skin often does, hers has got a look of dull canvas. It could be fixed up—she sees that. With the right kind of makeup a look of exotic sullenness could be managed. Her hair is more of a problem—the red that shows at the roots, with tinsel-strands of gray, gives an effect of isolated gaudiness. Nearly all the time she keeps it hidden by a scarf.

When the manager knocks on her door again, she has only a second or two of crazy expectation. He begins to call her name.

"Mrs. Massie, Mrs. Massie! Oh. I hoped you'd be in. I wondered if you could just come down and help me. It's the old bloke downstairs, he's fallen off the bed."

He goes ahead of her down the stairs, holding to the railing, and dropping each foot shakily, precipitately, onto the step below.

"His friend isn't there. I wondered. I didn't see him yesterday. I try to keep track of people, but I don't like to interfere. I thought he probably would've come back in the night. I was sweeping out the foyer and I heard a thump and I went in there. I wondered what was going on. Old bloke all by himself, on the floor."

The apartment is no larger than Gail's and laid out in the same way. It has curtains drawn over the bamboo blinds, which make it very dark. It smells of cigarettes and old cooking and some kind of pine-scented air freshener. The sofa bed has been pulled out, made into

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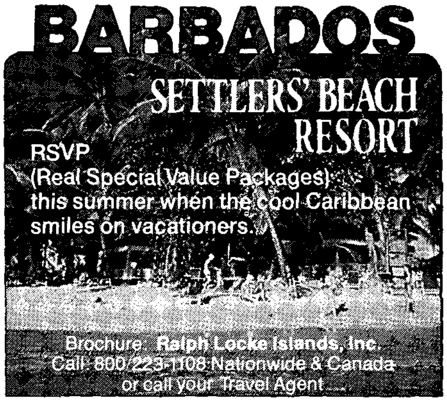

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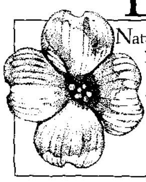

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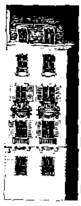

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a double bed, and the old man is lying on the floor beside it, having dragged some of the bedclothes with him. His head without the toupee is smooth and gray as a dirty piece of soap. His eyes are half shut and a noise is coming from deep inside him like the noise of an engine hopelessly trying to turn over.

"Have you phoned the ambulance?" Gail says.

"If you could just pick up the one end of him," the manager says. "I have a bad back and I dread putting it out again."

"Where is the phone?" says Gail. "He may have had a stroke. He may have broken his hip. He'll have to go to the hospital."

"Do you think so? His friend could lift him back and forth so easy. He had the strength. And now he's disappeared."

Gail says, "I'll phone."

"Oh, no. Oh, no. I have the number written down over the phone in my office. I don't let any other person go in there."

Left alone with the old man, who probably cannot hear her, Gail says, "It's all right. It's all right. We're getting help for you." Her voice sounds foolishly sociable. She leans down to pull the blanket up over his shoulders, and to her great surprise a hand flutters out and searches for and grabs her own. His hand is slight and bony, but warm enough, and dreadfully strong. "I'm here, I'm here," she says, and wonders if she is impersonating the red-haired young man, or some other young man, or a woman, or even his mother.

The ambulance comes quickly, with its harrowing pulsing cry, and the ambulance men with the stretcher cart are soon in the room, with the manager stumping after them, saying, ". . . couldn't be moved. Here is Mrs. Massie come down to help in the emergency."

While they are getting the old man onto the stretcher Gail has to pull her hand away, and he begins to complain, or she thinks he does—that steady involuntary-sounding noise he is making acquires an extra *ah-unh-anh.* So she takes his hand again as soon as she can, and trots beside him as he is wheeled out. He has such a grip on her that she feels as if he were pulling her along.

"He was the owner of the Jacaranda Hotel," the manager says. "Years ago. He was."

A few people are in the street, but nobody stops, nobody wants to be caught gawking. They want to see, they don't want to see.

"Shall I ride with him?" Gail says. "He doesn't seem to want to let go of me."

"It's up to you," one of the ambulance men says, and she climbs in. (She is dragged in, really, by that clutching hand.) The ambulance man puts down a little seat for her, the doors are closed, the siren starts as they pull away.

Through the window in the back door, then, she sees Will. He is about a block away from the Miramar and walking toward it. He is wearing a light-colored short-sleeved jacket and matching pants—probably called a safari suit—and his hair has grown whiter or been bleached by the sun, but she knows him at once, she will always know him, and will always have to call out to him when she sees him, as she does now, even trying to jump up from the seat, trying to pull her hand out of the old man's grasp.

"It's Will," she says to the ambulance man. "Oh, I'm sorry. It's my husband."

"Better not see you jumping out of a speeding ambulance, had he?" the man says. Then he says, "Oh-oh. What's happened here?"

For the next minute or so he pays professional attention to the old man. Soon he straightens up and says, "Gone."

"He's still holding on to me," says Gail. But she realizes as she says this that it isn't true. A moment ago he was holding on, with great force, it seemed—even enough force to pull her back, when she would have sprung toward Will—but now it is she who is holding on to him. His fingers are still quite warm.

WHEN she gets back from the hospital she finds the note that will be the last.

Gail. I know it's you.

HER rent is paid. She has left a note for the manager. She has taken her money out of the bank, got herself to the airport, found a flight. Her last library book remains in the apartment, accumulating fines.

She sees it lying beside the green couch. She sees the desert picture. She hears Will's voice at the door.

Gail. Gayla.

I know you're there.

I know you're still there.

Let me in. Answer me.

Talk to me. Answer me.

I know you're there. I can smell you through the keyhole. I can hear you, I can hear your heart, and your stomach rumbling and your brain jumping up and down.

Gail! Gayla!

Or perhaps the manager has told him, has shown him the note, which says nothing but *I have to leave.*

Or he hasn't come back, he never will come back, he will take himself and Sandy off to some other place.

IN the airport shop she sees a number of tiny boxes, made of clay by Australian aborigines. They are round, and light as pennies. She chooses one that has a pattern of yellow dots, irregularly spaced, on a dark-red ground. Against that, a swollen black figure with short splayed limbs—a turtle, maybe, helpless on its back.

She actually thinks, A present for Cleata. Then she remembers.

She might send it to Will. She might take it all the way back to Canada, then send it to Will. The yellow dots flung out that way remind her of a walk that she and Will went on, last fall. They walked from their house by the river up the wooded bank, and there they came upon something they had heard about but never seen before.

Hundreds, maybe thousands of butterflies were hanging in the trees, resting before their long flight down the shore of Lake Huron, across Lake Erie, and on south to Mexico. They hung like gaudy leaves, like flakes of gold tossed up in the trees.

"Like the shower of gold in the Bible," Gail said, and Will told her that she was confusing Jove with Jehovah.

On that day, Cleata had already begun to die. Will had already met Sandy.

What would you put in a box like that? A bead, a feather, a potent pill? Gail would put a note, folded up nearly to the size of a spitball.

Now it's up to you to follow me. ♦

THE CRITICS

BOOKS

PERFECTLY FRANK

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

"THERE are roughly three New Yorks," E. B. White wrote in his famous essay "Here Is New York"—the city of the natives, the city of the commuters, and, greatest of the three, the city of the settlers, those who came in search of something. It was the settlers who gave New York its passion, White said: "Whether it is a farmer arriving from Italy to set up a small grocery store in a slum . . . or a boy arriving from the Corn Belt with a manuscript in his suitcase and a pain in his heart, it makes no difference: each embraces New York with the intense excitement of first love, each absorbs New York with the fresh eyes of an adventurer, each generates heat and light to dwarf the Consolidated Edison Company."

When White wrote those words, in 1948, Francis O'Hara, a bookish young man from Grafton, Massachusetts, was in college, composing his first poems. He had never laid eyes on Manhattan. But his ambition, as recorded in his high-school yearbook, was to live in a big city, and in 1951 he got his wish: now going by the name Frank O'Hara, he arrived in New York and fell under its spell. Over the next fifteen years, until his death, at age forty, he became the city's most representative poet, and more than that: for most of his life, he was known less for his poetry than for his ceaseless activity in New York's art world, as a curator and critic, as a friend and collaborator and encourager, as a generator of heat and light. In one of New York's most splendid moments—some would say its last splendid moment—O'Hara was for many Manhattanites a symbol of the city and a kind of paradigm of the phenomenon that White had described, the person who becomes himself, or his most interesting self, by moving to New York.

For years, I'm told, publishers tried to get someone to write a biography of O'Hara. Now somebody has. Aptly titled "City Poet: The Life and Times of Frank O'Hara" (Knopf; $30), it is the work of Brad Gooch, a poet, novelist, and journalist who was thirteen when O'Hara died. Perhaps because he had no cushion of reminiscence to lie back on, Gooch has produced a minutely researched book. It tells a good tale that becomes sad only at the end.

O'Hara's was an ugly-duckling story. He was born to be grown up—to be an artist, to live in a city, to stay up till three—and until he reached that destination he was a misfit. When childhood memories surface in his poetry, they are almost always bitter:

> I hated dolls and I
> hated games, animals were
> not friendly and birds
> flew away.

As for his parents—Katherine O'Hara, who kept a nice house and gave covered-dish suppers, and Russell O'Hara, who owned a farming business and belonged to the Kiwanis Club, the school board, and the bowling league—here's another poem:

> I ran through the snow like a young Czarevitch!
> My gun was loaded and wolves disguised
> as treed nymphs pointed out where the fathers
> had hidden in gopher holes. I shot them right
> between the eyes! The mothers were harder to find,
> they changed themselves into grape arbors, vistas,
> and water holes, but I searched for the heart
> and shot them there!

As Gooch tells it, however, the O'Haras gave their son about as benign an upbringing as could be had in a small New England town in the thirties by a boy who, very early on, liked Proust and Hindemith better than baseball and girls. The family was not inartistic. Russell was a music lover; every night, before dinner, he would play his favorites—Rachmaninoff, Beethoven—on the music-room piano. There were aunts who bought Francis books and took him to the movies. Still, for the O'Haras art was an enjoyment; for Francis it was a destiny. His favorite author was James Joyce, his favorite book "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," his favorite scene the famous beach scene, where life and art, in the person of a bare-legged girl, call to Stephen Dedalus across the Dublin strand. O'Hara heard the same call—he was to be a composer or, at least, a concert pianist—and until he could answer it he spent many years as an introverted goody-goody discussing books with his aunts. After high school, he enlisted in the Navy, and there it was the same story. He sat in an upper bunk composing symphonies while his shipmates, down below, played poker and swore. People who knew him then say he was a very nice young man: quiet, earnest, kept to himself a lot. Anyone familiar with the mature O'Hara—witty, voluble, a real ball of fire—can't wait for this rather drippy young

Francis to grow up and become Frank.

Gooch, in an early statement of one of his main themes, suggests that what kept O'Hara's personality so damped down during his youth was his suppression of his homosexuality. But there was a lot besides homosexuality—namely, his passion for art—to make him feel like an outsider in his home town and in the Navy. For O'Hara, the magic formula, the thing that liberated his personality and his poetry, was the mixing of art with *friendship*. When he finally came into his own, all his friends were artists, and their friendships were about art. Conversely, his poetry was full of his friends, and about their friendships. Until he found these like-minded souls, he couldn't become himself.

The liberation began at Harvard, where, along with four thousand other returning veterans, O'Hara, age twenty, enrolled under the G.I. Bill in 1946. This was the beginning of that heady period when American artists, having spent decades gazing enviously at European modernism, finally pulled themselves together and created a modernism that was wholly their own, in the process shifting the international capital of the art world from Paris to New York. The waves broke over Cambridge as well. On a not atypical weekend during O'Hara's freshman year, the Harvard Music Department sponsored lectures by Roger Sessions and Virgil Thomson, a performance of a new string trio by Schoenberg, and the world première of Martha Graham's "Night Journey." During O'Hara's years at Harvard, there were readings by T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, Dylan Thomas, Marianne Moore, Edith Sitwell, Archibald MacLeish, and Stephen Spender. Among his schoolmates were John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Robert Bly, Robert Creeley, Donald Hall, Adrienne Rich, Harold Brodkey, John Updike, and Alison Lurie. The Cambridge literary scene was lively enough so that John Ciardi—whose creative-writing class was O'Hara's favorite course—could write a "Letter from Harvard" for *Poetry*.

This was a new world for O'Hara, a world that was full of art, and where the love of art was normal. He blossomed, and, not surprisingly, in view of its delay, the blossom was rather elaborate. He became expansive, brilliant, mannered. He and his roommate, Edward Gorey, furnished their rooms with chaise longues, on which, of an evening, they would recline, listening to Marlene Dietrich records and discussing their favorite authors, Ronald Firbank and Ivy Compton-Burnett, while friends dropped by for cocktails. Gooch stresses O'Hara's preciosity during these years, and he has evidence. (Reading Plato around this time, O'Hara wrote to a friend, "Really that Socrates is such a bitch!") But, as Gooch also notes, O'Hara read a lot besides Firbank. He was a passionate modernist—his gods were Joyce and Gertrude Stein—and in 1949 he gave himself a long, breathless course in Rimbaud and the French Surrealists, an experience that was to leave its mark on his later poetry. He seems, in addition, to have attended every concert, every art exhibition, every movie that Cambridge had to offer, and found time to sunbathe with his friends on the banks of the Charles. He didn't go to class much, or not the classes he was enrolled in. He treated Harvard the way he was soon to treat New York, rejoicing in it, following his pleasure.

The experience changed him utterly. By his sophomore year, he had abandoned music for poetry. Tellingly, this decision followed swiftly upon the death of his music-loving father. Another thing that followed his father's death was his mother's descent into alcoholism. She became the worst kind of drunk—desperate, weepy, wheedling, nasty. O'Hara, who as a child had adored Katherine, came to hate her. He made his last visit to Grafton, for an aunt's funeral, at age twenty-five. After that, he did not go home again, and, though as an adult he was famously openmouthed ("I tell everyone everything. It's the Norman Mailer in me, UUUUUUUUUUUGH"), he almost never mentioned his family. He had become Frank—at the end of his Harvard years he began signing his work that way—and he put Francis firmly behind him.

No surprise, in view of the world that now opened to him. New York in the fifties already had most of the problems it has now. Crime, racial tensions, homeless people—White describes them all in "Here Is New York." But, oh, what else it had! Jazz was in a golden age. At the Five Spot, on Cooper Square, you could hear Charles Mingus, Sonny Rollins, Cecil Taylor, Thelonious Monk, Billie Holiday. Farther uptown, at the City Center, American ballet was being born. In 1948, George Balanchine had founded a permanent company, New York City Ballet, and on his stage Maria Tallchief, Tanaquil Le Clercq, and Diana Adams were initiating new audiences into a species of artistic fantasy unknown in America a decade before. In painting, of course, the fifties was the period of the Abstract Expressionists. Jackson Pollock was already a famous man; *Life* had run an article on him in 1949. Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, and Mark Rothko were still laboring quietly but producing their best work, and their generation was now breeding a second generation: Larry Rivers, Grace Hartigan, Jane Freilicher, Al Leslie, Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell. The excitement in the art world was boosted by the spectacular retrospectives being mounted at the Museum of Modern Art under the direction of Alfred Barr (Bonnard in 1948, Munch and Soutine in 1950, and, most spectacular, the Matisse retrospective of 1951)—shows that were the more dazzling to New York's artists in that so few of them, in those postwar days, had been to Europe. And all this could be had cheaply. For a number of months after arriving in New York, O'Hara was unemployed, and so were many of his friends, but they seem to have eaten out every night and then hit the bars or the ballet or some other place that today you'd have to save up to go to.

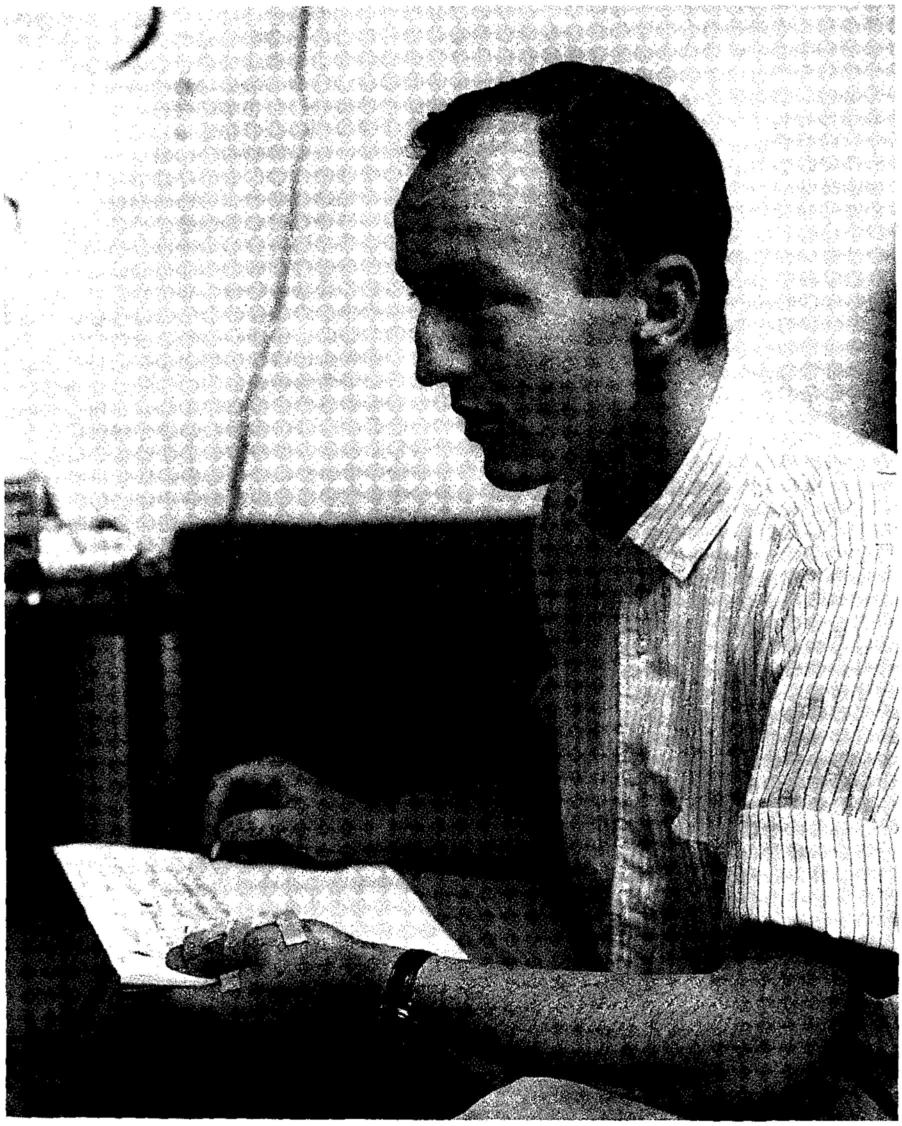
They knew what they had. In those days, most young artists adored New York—painted it, wrote about it, didn't like to leave it. Even its discomforts were dear to them. Once, detained in Cambridge on a job, O'Hara wrote to a friend, "It's not hot enough, it's not crowded enough, there's not enough asphalt, and you can see over buildings too easily." New York, he and his friends felt, was giving them the kind of life Paris had given preceding generations. That the young painters had the School of Paris on their minds, and felt a conscious, prickly, underdog-pulls-ahead pride, is most obvious in Robert Motherwell's christening the Abstract Expressionists the New York School, a name then copied by the gallery owner John Bernard Myers when he dubbed O'Hara and his friends John Ashbery, James Schuyler, and Kenneth Koch the New York School of poets. As Larry Rivers later wrote, "we wanted to taste that special lollipop Picasso, Matisse, Miró, Apollinaire, Éluard, and Aragon had tasted and find out what it was like."

O'Hara had met Rivers on an early visit to New York, in 1950. They became friends instantly (and lovers two years later). Another important early friend was Jane Freilicher, so when O'Hara moved to New York, in 1951, he immediately fell in with the younger painters of the New York School. For the remainder of his years, painters and painting were his first loves. ("You know how / I feel about painters," he wrote in a 1957 poem. "I sometimes think poetry / only describes.") In late 1951—in order, he said, to be closer to the Matisse show—he applied for a job selling tickets at the front desk at MOMA. He was hired, and, except for a short break (from 1953 to 1955, when he went off to write for *Art News*), he worked at MOMA for the rest of his life, eventually rising to the position of associate curator. He did most of his work in the museum's International Program, whose mission, in those Cold War years, was to get the new American art out on the road, where it could boost the nation's prestige. He helped put together the landmark "New American Painting" exhibition of 1958, the first group show of Abstract Expressionists to tour Europe. (By the end of that tour, Gooch says, Abstract Expressionism "was rivaling jazz as America's most influential cultural export.") He supervised major retrospectives of Kline, Motherwell, Reuben Nakian, and David Smith and produced a steady stream of articles, interviews, and catalogue essays on other artists. In other words, he was a major player, on an official level, in the rise of American painting in the nineteen-fifties.

But the museum was just nine to five. O'Hara dunked himself, nightly, in the arts of New York. He spent long, entranced evenings in the jazz clubs. He adored movies—had loved them since childhood—and liked to go to double features in Times Square. In his poetry, when he speaks of movies, even silly ones, you can hear him holding his breath for sheer wonder:

> I went to my first movie
> and the hero got his legs
> cut off by a steam engine
> in a freightyard, in my second
>
> Karen Morley got shot
> in the back by an arrow
> I think she was an heiress
> it came through her bathroom door

HANS NAMUTH



Frank O'Hara working in Larry Rivers' Manhattan studio, 1958.

But his real altar, aside from painting, was New York City Ballet, where he often went with his friend Edwin Denby, America's first great dance critic. At the ballet, one of his friends says, O'Hara "would gasp, get teary-eyed, reach out and grasp his companion by the forearm." I'm not sure this is the kind of thing I would want going on in the seat next to me, but it gives some idea of the ardor, the emotionalism, with which O'Hara embraced art. He only went after things he loved, and love, as he saw it, was what the experience was all about. He hated critics. His 1951 poem "The Critic" opens:

> I cannot possibly think of you
> other than you are: the assassin
> of my orchards.

His own art reviews were almost always appreciations.

When he wasn't at the movies or the ballet or the Five Spot, he was in a bar discussing these things with his friends. New York's bar scene in the fifties is by now well-grazed ground, but Gooch manages to make it sound interesting again. There was the San Remo, mostly a writers' bar, on Bleecker Street, where Paul Goodman held court. A few blocks north, at University Place and Eighth Street, was the Cedar Tavern, the painters' bar. (It's now a quieter establishment at University and Tenth.) The Cedar was where the Abstract Expressionists went to gossip and fight. Jackson Pollock was there every Tuesday—he lived in the Hamptons, but he came to town once a week for his psychiatric appointment—and he set the truculent tone of the place. One night, in a fight with Franz Kline, he tore down the men's-room door. (According to Ronald Sukenick's history of the period, "Down and In,” Pollock was then banished from the Cedar for a month. On certain nights, he could be seen peering sadly through the window. “No, Jackson!” his friends would shout. “Two more weeks!”) These revels were made possible by a truly extraordinary rate of alcohol consumption. At least half the Abstract Expressionists seem to have been alcoholics. One night, when the last call was announced at the Cedar, Kline ordered sixteen Scotch-and-sodas for himself and Elaine de Kooning. O’Hara, too, drank very heavily. He also smoked three packs of Camels a day. This was the last bash before the “personal health” movement of the sixties, and one reads about it with a certain nostalgia.

The bars were where these people went to conduct their friendships, and no one had more friendships than O’Hara. “I can no more resist people than music,” he wrote to his parents while he was in the Navy, and that was when he had no friends. By the end of his first few months in New York, he had a large circle around him, and it grew yearly. (At O’Hara’s funeral, Larry Rivers said that there were at least sixty people in New York who thought Frank O’Hara was their best friend.) Many of these friendships were cemented, and complicated, by the fact that they were taken to bed. Probably the two great loves of O’Hara’s life were Rivers, with whom he had a stormy, on-and-off affair in the early fifties, and Vincent Warren, a sweet-tempered ballet dancer, thirteen years his junior, who was his flame from 1959 to 1961, and to whom he wrote a number of beautiful love poems. But he seems to have gone to bed with most of his other friends as well, or, at least, with the men (and one or two of the women)—a habit that to his romantic and unfastidious mind seemed quite natural. He loved art and he loved people and he loved to be in love, particularly with people who made art. Alcohol helped, of course. At 3 A.M., with a pint or two of bourbon in them, O’Hara and his friends did not trouble themselves long over whose door they knocked on. O’Hara one night made a pass at Rivers’ teen-age son. Rivers, for his part, was once intercepted by his estranged wife on his way to his mother-in-law’s bedroom. Such lapses aside, however, the tone of the sexual go-round in O’Hara’s circle was notably idealistic. O’Hara wanted to be one with beauty, to clasp it to him. Writing in 1961 of David Smith’s recent sculptures, he said that they “didn’t make me feel I wanted to *have* one, they made me feel I wanted to *be* one.” If he could have gone to bed with them, too, he would have.

What he loved, he fostered. Important though he was as a curator and writer, he was probably more influential in the art world simply as a hand-holder, an encourager. He would look at his friends’ work and tell them what it was, and how wonderful it was. As Kenneth Koch described it to Gooch, “they’d have all these wonderful ideas and feelings about themselves, and they’d say, ‘Duh,’ and Frank would say ‘Yes, you put that green there. That’s the first interesting thing that’s been done since Matisse’s “Number 267.”’” Larry Rivers and Grace Hartigan notably thrived under his encouragement, and so did others. Edwin Denby, though he was twenty-three years older, said that O’Hara was a catalyst for him. “But then,” Denby added, “he was everybody’s catalyst.”

O’Hara’s fostering of other people’s work was all the more effective in that it was not, for him, a moral imperative, something he felt he should do, but something he did naturally. He was an instinctively generous person. At poetry readings, he routinely devoted large parts of his allotted time to reading the work of other poets—a rare practice. He was kind to the competition: of his circle of poets, he was practically the only one to hold out a hand to the Beats. On the few occasions when he went on record against another artist, it was usually for lack of generosity. He accused T. S. Eliot of having a “deadening” effect on modern poetry, primarily by laying down exclusionary rules: “saying you’re not supposed to read Milton, and so on . . . Which is ridiculous.” His widely quoted criticism of Robert Lowell, from an interview published in 1966, was aimed at the same fault: failure of good will. Commenting on Lowell’s “Skunk Hour,” with its scene of the poet prowling a lovers’ lane, O’Hara said:

> Lowell has . . . a confessional manner which [lets him] get away with things that are really just plain bad but you’re supposed to be interested because he’s supposed to be so upset. . . . I don’t think that anyone has to get themselves to go and watch lovers in a parking lot necking in order to write a poem, and I don’t see why it’s admirable if they feel guilty about it. They should feel guilty.

O’HARA’S generosity toward the world sometimes has a certain proto-flower-power coloration. “Oh! kangaroos, sequins, chocolate sodas!” one poem begins—but it is an early poem (1950). Over the years, his good will toughened, became more objective without becoming less good. Specifically, it was subsumed into what came to be the dominant attitude of all his mature writing, critical or poetic: attention. “Attention equals Life,” he wrote in his introduction to Denby’s 1965 essay collection, “Dancers, Buildings and People in the Streets.” That was his praise of Denby—that he kept his eyes open—but the description fits O’Hara as well. And this amoral, almost animal quality of attentiveness gives to O’Hara’s sweetness a sturdier character. What might have been sentimentality becomes large-mindedness, zest—a capacity for interest and enjoyment that can still, across the space of decades, suck us back into the minds-on-fire spirit of those years.

That is what happens in the best of O’Hara’s art criticism. An exemplary piece is “Larry Rivers: ‘Why I Paint As I Do,’ ” which appeared in *Horizon* in 1959. In the course of this interview, O’Hara brings Rivers out on almost every important question that needed to be asked about art at that time: abstraction versus representation, style versus subject matter, Europe versus America, influence versus individuality, consistency (an important matter to the Abstract Expressionists) versus suggestibility. Yet all these issues seem to bump up naturally out of the conversation between the two men as they stand there in Rivers’ studio—with the lamp here, the dog there—chatting, pointing, carrying on their friendship. (“What is this down here?” asks O’Hara. “Is she wearing shorts?” “What’s the matter with you?” Rivers answers. “Are you blind? She had a *skirt* on.”) It is all wonderfully unpretentious, and this gives the issues involved a great solidity. Abstraction, representation: they seem as real as the dog. Anyone who wants to get a quick sense of O’Hara’s world should get hold of “Art Chronicles, 1954-1966” (Braziller; $14.95, paper), a posthumous collection of his art criticism, and read this interview.

That same unpretentiousness became

the trademark of O'Hara's mature poetry. In his early years, he went through what John Ashbery has called a French Zen period, producing long, hallucinatory poems under the tutelary light of the French Symbolists and Surrealists. The prime example is his 1953 "Second Avenue," with its four hundred and seventy-eight lines full of seas and suns, snakes and snot, roses and gorillas and other items from Rimbaud's arsenal. Nor did he ever entirely put this mode behind him. His 1962 "Biotherm (for Bill Berkson)" is in the same vein. Certain critics—Marjorie Perloff in her excellent "Frank O'Hara: Poet Among Painters" (1977), Geoff Ward in his "Statutes of Liberty: The New York School of Poets" (St. Martin's; $35)—have found kind things to say about these long, febrile poems, but I think that almost anyone reading O'Hara's work chronologically will breathe a sigh of relief when, in the mid-fifties, another tutelary light, William Carlos Williams, takes over, and O'Hara begins regularly producing short, plainspoken poems about the world in front of his eyes: the ballet, the jazz clubs, the friends, the city. Very soon he masters the form, and we have a vision and a voice that are only O'Hara's:

> It's my lunch hour, so I go
> for a walk among the hum-colored
> cabs. First, down the sidewalk
> where laborers feed their dirty
> glistening torsos sandwiches
> and Coca-Cola, with yellow helmets
> on. They protect them from falling
> bricks, I guess. Then onto the
> avenue where skirts are flipping
> above heels and blow up over
> grates. The sun is hot, but the
> cabs stir up the air. I look
> at bargains in wristwatches. There
> are cats playing in sawdust.
>   On
> to Times Square, where the sign
> blows smoke over my head, and higher
> the waterfall pours lightly. A
> Negro stands in a doorway with a
> toothpick, languorously agitating.
> A blonde chorus girl clicks: he
> smiles and rubs his chin. Everything
> suddenly honks: it is 12:40 of
> a Thursday.

Obviously, Rimbaud and the Surrealists still mean something to him. The cabs are hum-colored, and the objects are juxtaposed in a sort of montage. But the montage is not surreal—it's real, it's New York City—and the objects don't fly around in that self-important, *dérèglement des sens* way. They stay put, and hum and honk the way they should. Waterfalls pour from the sky, but they're really there, on a billboard. In the city O'Hara found his own, more modest version of Surrealist hallucination.

Unlike Surrealism, it is all grounded in real time: Thursday, 12:40. O'Hara loved things that lived in time, things that *moved*—ballet, movies, Action painting, New York—and he made himself the partner of time. In the middle of a 1957 poem, "John Button Birthday," he breaks off his thought and writes:

> Now I have taken down the underwear
> I washed last night from the various light fixtures
> and can proceed.

And he proceeds, but not without our feeling, through the rest of the poem, that we can hear the clock ticking in O'Hara's apartment.

This alliance with time left its mark on his art criticism. In the interviews and studio visits, where he can talk about something that is alive and going forward, he is unbeatable. In the big catalogue essays, where he is dealing with something stopped in time—a retrospective, often a retrospective of a dead artist—he is nowhere near as good. The job of summation sits heavy on him; he becomes grandiloquent, ponderous. In the poetry, he rarely generalizes. What emotions he feels, what meanings he finds must be content to glint at us from within the flow of events; he won't fish them out. "The wish *not* to impute significance has rarely been stronger in lyric poetry," Helen Vendler wrote in her review of O'Hara's "Collected Poems." "It happened, it went like this, it's over."

This avoidance of what O'Hara called "the important utterance" separates him from most of the other major poets of his time, dominated as they still were by the Pound/Eliot inheritance. Another thing that sets him apart is his unwillingness to join the priesthood of craft, that often flagellant order, founded by Eliot as the only means of expressing the infinitely difficult feelings that, in his view, were the business of poetry. To quote the famous lines from "East Coker":

>   each venture
> Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
> With shabby equipment always deteriorating
> In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
> Undisciplined squads of emotion.

But, Eliot concludes stoically, "for us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

O'Hara found this tragic pose absurd. For him, "the rest"—that is, living—*was* his business. As for "the trying," what was so hard about it? This was more or less the position he took in "Personism," an aggressively flip manifesto (actually, anti-manifesto) that he wrote in 1959:

> I don't have to make elaborately sounded structures. . . . I don't even like rhythm, assonance, all that stuff. You just go on your nerve. If someone's chasing you down the street with a knife, you don't turn around and shout, "Give it up! I was a track star for Mineola Prep."

And why make such a big moral deal out of poetry anyway? If people didn't like poetry, "bully for them."

> After all, only Whitman and Crane and Williams, of the American poets, are better than the movies. As for measure and other technical apparatus, that's just common sense: if you're going to buy a pair of pants you want them to be tight enough so everyone will want to go to bed with you. There's nothing metaphysical about it.

I don't know how many people read "Personism" during O'Hara's lifetime. (It was first published in *Yūgen*, a little magazine edited by O'Hara's friend LeRoi Jones.) But the poems were manifesto enough. With their colloquialism, with their empirical record of daily events, with the friends wandering in and out—"Jap" (Jasper Johns) waiting at the train station, "Allen" (Ginsberg, hung over) in the bathroom, throwing up—and, above all, with their craft so lightly worn, the poems constituted a clear refusal, if not of the high mission of poetry, then of any duty to kneel before the throne.

As might be expected, they were

coolly received. O'Hara had a special power over reviewers. They gazed on him and they turned to squares: stuffy, righteous, unable to get jokes. At best, they might concede that he had a certain charm. "His long invertebrate verse lines can be amiable and gay, like streamers of crepe paper fluttering before an electric fan," Marius Bewley wrote in *The New York Review of Books* in 1966—but the note of condescension is typical.

I don't mean to make O'Hara into an art martyr. As Vendler has pointed out, the fact that his early work was widely ignored is probably due more to the weakness of the early work than to any old-fogy cabal marshalled against him. Furthermore, if O'Hara wasn't taken seriously, this was partly because he often acted as though he didn't take himself seriously—or not as a poet. He didn't try to get his work published in places where it would be seen. Indeed, most of the time he didn't try to get it published at all. Often, his poems appeared only because some editor, usually of an out-of-the-way magazine or publishing house, came to him personally. Even then, it wasn't easy to get poems out of him, because he didn't know where they were. The poet Diane Di Prima described to Gooch what it was like to try to extract poems from O'Hara for a small journal she edited in the early sixties:

> I would go up to his place and he'd let me look through everything including the dirty laundry. He'd finish poems and put them anyplace. . . . The towel drawer was a very good place because I guess towels were flat. I would just take whatever I wanted. Often he didn't have another copy.

Several of his best poems were not published until after his death. Some poems he had never shown to anyone. Many were probably lost. ("Memorial Day 1950," an important early poem, survived only because he showed it to John Ashbery and Ashbery copied it out in a letter to Kenneth Koch and Koch kept the letter.)

Though at times O'Hara spoke proudly of his work, at other times his comments on his poetry were as diffident as his treatment of it. "I've only been doing very few poems," he wrote to Ashbery in 1961, "and they are pretty much blabbing along chicly while sitting on WC Williams' cracker barrel with my legs crossed." He also made a practice—encouraged, of course, by his having a full-time job—of writing on the fly, and he advertised this fact. When he wrote a poem in somebody's bathroom during a dinner party, he entitled it "Bathroom" (1963). Many of his poems were penned during his lunch hour, and the title of the volume in which these poems were published—in 1964, after years of dawdling on his part—was "Lunch Poems."

Eventually, though, O'Hara acquired some standing as a poet, at least with other poets. His rise began in 1960, with the publication of Donald Allen's "The New American Poetry: 1945-1960," an anthology that made a big splash by virtue of its concentration on young, anti-academic poets whose work had previously been available only in the samizdat of little magazines, coffee-shop readings, and the like. The Beats were there, and the Black Mountain group, but the poet who was given the most space—fifteen poems—was O'Hara. (Allen was a friend of O'Hara's. He knew what was in the towel drawer.) Through "The New American Poetry," O'Hara won the hearts of teen-age poets across the land, a number of whom—Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, David Shapiro—came to New York and became, in varying degrees, O'Hara disciples. By the time he published his last book, the 1965 "Love Poems (Tentative Title)"—note, again, the insistent casualness—he was well known. He was then thirty-nine, not an extraordinarily late age for a poet to reach before achieving fame.

O'Hara, however, didn't live to enjoy it. He died the following year, in a freak accident on a beach. And, because he died young, an annoying little cloud of extra-literary sentiment hangs over his reputation. As Richard Howard put it in "Alone with America," O'Hara, for many people, is not just a poet but a "man-who-has-died-at-forty." A number of his friends and admirers fell prey to a certain who-killed-John-Keats righteousness on his behalf, something that would have been abhorrent to him. (In 1966, Al Leslie produced a series of seven paintings, collectively entitled "The Killing of Frank O'Hara," that portrayed O'Hara's death in terms that would not have been inappropriate to a Descent from the Cross.) And since his death, as a kind of reparation for his spotty publishing record during his life, practically every surviving word he ever wrote has been published, including some very minor things. This trend, together with the finger-pointing about who didn't appreciate him when he was alive, has, of course, provoked a backlash. When the "Collected Poems" came out, in 1971, five years after his death, there were a great many tart remarks about the presumed disparity between that six-hundred-page volume and the actual measure of O'Hara's gift. "I find him gay, glancing, ephemeral," William Dickey wrote in *The Hudson Review*. "He's fun, bitchy—and here he is enshrined in a volume that rivals the Variorum Yeats."

All this is unfortunate, for it obscures the poetry, which is not at all bitchy and, though fun, is more than fun. Despite O'Hara's anti-metaphysical bent, many of his poems have a kind of dome of glory that rises up over the minutiae of his days. The clearest example is "A True Account of Talking to the Sun at Fire Island," a variation on a similar poem by Mayakovsky, whom O'Hara loved. Now a favorite anthology item, it's one of the poems that were not discovered until after his death. As it opens, the sun wakes him up, addressing him like a kind but grouchy old uncle:

> "Hey! I've been
> trying to wake you up for fifteen
> minutes. Don't be so rude, you are
> only the second poet I've ever chosen
> to speak to personally . . .
>
> When I woke up Mayakovsky he was
> a lot more prompt."

O'Hara apologizes, and the sun, mollified, tells the reason for this unusual visit:

> "Frankly I wanted to tell you
> I like your poetry. I see a lot
> on my rounds and you're okay. You may
> not be the greatest thing on earth, but
> you're different. Now, I've heard some
> say you're crazy, they being excessively
> calm themselves to my mind, and other
> crazy poets think that you're a boring
> reactionary. Not me."
>
> "Oh Sun, I'm so grateful to you!"
>
> "Thanks and remember I'm watching. It's
> easier for me to speak to you out
> here. I don't have to slide down
> between buildings to get your ear.
> I know you love Manhattan, but
> you ought to look up more often.
> And
> always embrace things, people earth
> sky stars, as I do, freely.
>
> Maybe we'll

speak again in Africa, of which I too
am specially fond. Go back to sleep now."

"Sun, don't go!" I was awake
at last. "No, go I must, they're calling
me."
"Who are they?"
Rising he said "Some
day you'll know. They're calling to you
too." Darkly he rose, and then I slept.

In the doomed-poet drama that has been retrospectively read into O'Hara's story, this poem has been taken as a premonition of death. But to me the most remarkable thing about it is O'Hara's sense of blessedness, an emotion that surfaces again and again in his verse. Indeed, it is one of the things ("gay, glancing") held against him by those who feel that he was not a serious person. This, in turn, has led some of his defenders to overstress the sadness—presumably a warranty of seriousness—that can sometimes be detected in his poetry. The light tread of his lyrics, Geoff Ward says, "is only a step away from the grave." It is true that O'Hara had the Irish sense of life, but the note of grief would be far less persuasive if it were not accompanied, as it almost always is, by the keenest possible responsiveness to life's goodness. Even at his most depressed, when his romance with Vincent Warren is falling apart, O'Hara is witty. ("I walk in / sit down and / face the frigidaire"—presumably Vincent.) When, on the other hand, that relationship is going well, even bad things seem good to him: "Even the stabbings are helping the population explosion." Boyfriends aside, he finds a thousand things to like. Ballet dancers fly through his verse. Taxi-drivers tell him funny things. Zinka Milanov sings, the fountains splash. The city honks at him and he honks back. This willingness to be happy is one of the things for which O'Hara is most loved, and rightly so. It is a fundamental aspect of his moral life, and the motor of his poetry. Even Ward, whose book is a poststructuralist study, offering us the unlooked-for experience of seeing O'Hara analyzed in relation to polysemy, differential valorization, and French gynocriticism, finally throws up his hands. "The poetry of Frank O'Hara has an incomparable warmth and humanity," he exclaims. "It is only through such poetry that people in the future will think that life in New York City in the fifties and sixties must have been good." Ward is a professor at the University of Liverpool. I hope he has tenure. This is not the way a poststructuralist analysis is supposed to end.

THE facts of O'Hara's life receive full justice in Gooch's biography. Gooch has gone everywhere, interviewed everyone. As is often the case in such carefully researched books, there is too much detail. O'Hara cannot walk across Harvard Square without our being told what product is being advertised on the billboard overhead (Royal Crown Par-T-Pak Beverages). He cannot be born without our learning the name of the obstetrician, Maurice Shamer, M.D., though Dr. Shamer has no further role in the book.

When Gooch gets to the subject of O'Hara's homosexuality, the amount of detail becomes overwhelming. If O'Hara as much as invites the postman in, if he pays a midnight call on a security guard at the United Nations, we hear about it. And when Gooch is not talking about O'Hara's homosexuality his interviewees are. This seems to be the first—or, at least, the second—matter on which he questioned everyone. Was O'Hara "out" as a teen-ager? No, he wasn't, but several people have to testify before this obvious conclusion can be reached. Did he make out with a Navy buddy one night on shore leave? Gooch can't be sure, but he calls three witnesses. Did a short story that O'Hara published in the Harvard *Advocate* in 1948 have "gay overtones"? "It's quite possible," says John Ashbery, but we never find out what the gay overtones were or whether they figured importantly in the story. Much of what we get on the Harvard years is the record of O'Hara's coming out: chaise longues, Marlene Dietrich records, letters beginning "Mon ange." This is perhaps justifiable—his coming out was certainly important, and coincided with his decision to be a poet—but the subject of O'Hara's sexual preference is pursued just as energetically once he gets to New York and begins leading a much less precious sort of life—a life, furthermore, in bohemian circles, where homosexuality was in no way remarkable, and where, in consequence, he does not seem to have had any conflicts, or even any interesting thoughts, about it. O'Hara was not a famous Lothario, nor was he a famous homosexual, that is, famous, in part, for being homosexual, like Gide or Cocteau. Nor can it be said that his work was notably homosexual—that his vision would have been different had he been heterosexual. Change a few details in the love poems, and they sound like what a man might

"I see we're not wearing our Mets cap."

have written to a woman in the fifties.

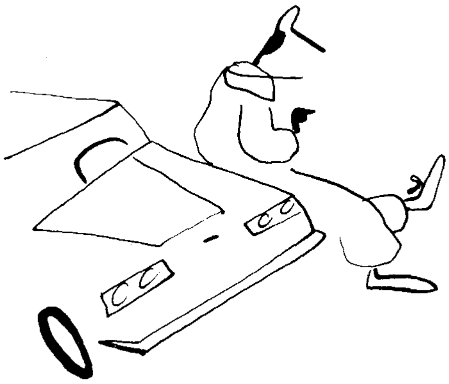
Gooch's dwelling on O'Hara's homosexuality is part of the Antithesis, a reaction to all the writings on homosexual artists in which homosexuality was unmentioned or glossed over, even when it was crucial. How long will we wait for the Synthesis, the time when homosexual artists will be treated like heterosexual artists? It will not serve the cause of justice for an artist of O'Hara's general, human appeal to be put forth as a "gay poet." Gooch does not apply that label, but the accumulation of sexual detail does it for him. And, in case you're thinking that this material, however excessive, might nevertheless be fun to read, forget it. Larry Rivers describing exactly what he and O'Hara did in bed, who put what where, who did what then—there's something grim about it, something dogged.

There's something dogged about the book as a whole. Gooch does not seem to have strong feelings about O'Hara—does not criticize him, defend him, possess him. Practically the only thing for which O'Hara gets his hand slapped is disloyalty to homosexuality. His tendency to fall for heterosexual men is described as "self-deception," demonstrating a "lack of self-acceptance." When, on a trip to Spain, he writes to Vincent Warren that in Madrid, as in New York, "the queens always hate me and the heterosexual painters seem to like me," he is chided by Gooch for distancing himself from his "fellow homosexuals." That failing apart, Gooch rarely judges O'Hara or his poetry. Changes in O'Hara's style are kept track of, and the work is quoted as evidence for the life, but Gooch makes no sustained argument for O'Hara as a poet. (For that, see Perloff.) His impassivity may be an act of deference. There are many, many people around who knew O'Hara. Gooch didn't, and this circumstance may have encouraged a certain modesty on his part. He may also have wanted to steer clear of both the sentimentality and the anti-sentimentality that surround O'Hara's reputation. But the result is a little cold.

On the other hand, Gooch certainly *gives us the facts*, many of them germane to the poetry. It is good to find out how much O'Hara knew about music and how much he loved it—this helps to explain the unforced music of his verse—and it is interesting to learn how enormously well read he was. When O'Hara chose a plain style, it was truly a choice, not the outpouring of an artless soul. Furthermore, Gooch does manage to capture the spirit of bright cheer that blew through New York in the fifties. People drank too much, it's true, but they had a lot of fun.

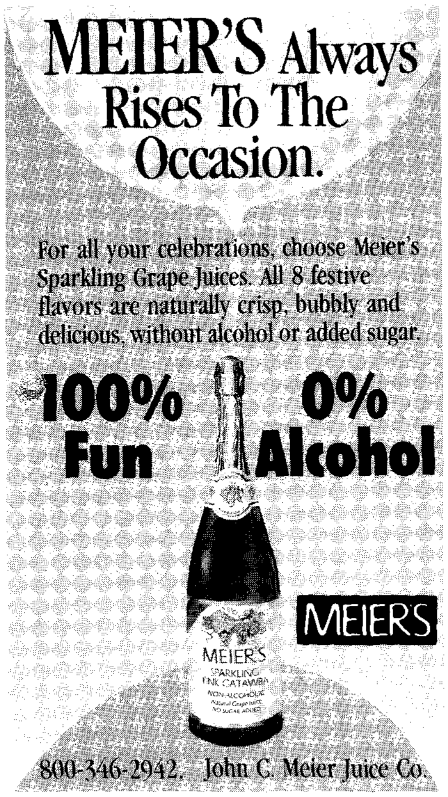
THOSE were the good times, though. O'Hara's crowd had less fun in the sixties. They started getting older, getting married, going on the wagon. Meanwhile, their beliefs and their reputations were slowly cast into shadow as Pop art supplanted Abstract Expressionism. In Gooch's book, James Rosenquist tells of a party at the collector Burton Tremaine's house in 1962. Andy Warhol was there, along with other Pop artists. In the middle of the party, de Kooning and Larry Rivers showed up. "Tremaine stopped them in their tracks and said, 'Oh, so nice to see you. But please, at any other time.' " They left. "At that moment," says Rosenquist, "I thought, something in the art world has definitely changed." A few years later, at a party in the Hamptons, we have de Kooning screaming at Warhol, "You're a killer of art, a killer of beauty!" O'Hara disliked Warhol, too. He disapproved of his morals, and he was pained by Warhol's substitution of silk-screening and mechanical reproduction for the more human and personal brushstroke. Generous as always, he found something decent to say about Warhol in a 1965 interview—"a terribly serious artist"—and he was friends with other Pop artists, but, according to the painter Wynn Chamberlain, Warhol represented death to O'Hara: "*And to all of us at that* point. He was the prophet of doom."

As O'Hara's world began to crumble, so did he. In 1961, Vincent Warren, who had always been somewhat overwhelmed by O'Hara's feeling for him, decamped to Montreal. O'Hara was heartbroken, and never had another great love. To his friends' dismay, he began going to parties with rich people, and he drank more and more. By 1962, he was starting the day with a bourbon and orange juice, and he became a mean drunk. He had terrible hangovers, crying jags, fights with friends. In 1965, [illegible]e LeSueur, the ex-lover who had shared his apartment and been his steady friend for nine years, moved out. (O'Hara had made a move on a young man LeSueur considered his.) The poetry dried up. During his two years with Vincent Warren, from 1959 to 1961, he had written close to a hundred poems. In 1964, he wrote fourteen; in 1965, two. He was better known than ever before, and he still did his job at the museum very well, but many of his assignments were sad tasks: retrospectives of artists, like Franz Kline and David Smith, who had meant the world to him and were now dead.



In the summer of 1966, when he was beginning work on another such show, a Pollock retrospective, he went for a weekend to the arts patron Morris Golde's house on Fire Island—a party that also included Virgil Thomson and J. J. Mitchell, the man who had been the subject of his quarrel with LeSueur. After dinner, the four of them went to a bar on the beach. Golde and Thomson left early; they were tired. Around 2 A.M., after many drinks, O'Hara and Mitchell got into a water taxi, but it soon broke down, and the passengers got out. While they were waiting for another taxi, a jeep came down the beach. Everyone got out of its path except O'Hara. It hit him straight on. He died the next day. It was a death befitting his life—accidental, something that happened to him while he was walking along. He was buried on Long Island, in the cemetery where Pollock had been laid to rest. The funeral was mobbed, though he had written in a 1956 poem that he didn't want anyone there:

When I die, don't come, I wouldn't
  want a leaf
to turn away from the sun—it loves it
  there.
There's nothing so spiritual about
  being happy
but you can't miss a day of it, because
  it doesn't last. ♦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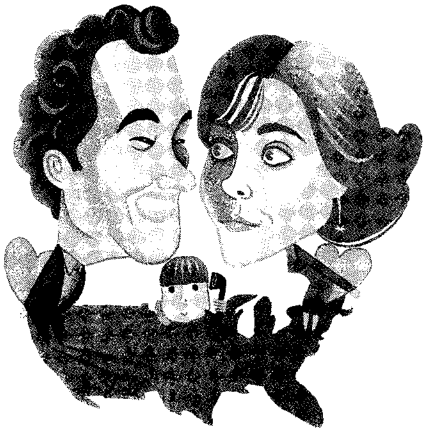
THE CURRENT CINEMA

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

BY ANTHONY LANE

“SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE” stars Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, so it has to be worth seeing. On the other hand, it doesn't really star Tom Hanks *with* Meg Ryan, so don't get too excited. They spend the whole movie falling for each other but hardly ever meet in person. It's a horribly suitable idea for the nineties, the last word in romantic common sense—a couple who practice safe love. Ryan plays Annie Reed, bored in Baltimore and sliding into marriage as if it were a coma. Hanks plays Sam Baldwin, recently widowed and living in Seattle. The opening shot shows him looking mournful in a cemetery, with his eight-year-old son, Jonah (Ross Malinger), standing next to him. Comic leading man plus weepy backdrop plus kid sidekick—yes, it's a Nora Ephron movie. She wrote this one with David S. Ward and Jeff Arch, and directed it by herself.


Far-fetched: Tom Hanks, Ross Malinger, and Meg Ryan in “Sleepless in Seattle.”

On Christmas Eve, a lonely Jonah rings a radio talk show to tell the nation about his dad, who really needs a new wife. Sam then comes on the line and, with a little pushing, confirms his predicament: he could do with another love but doesn't give it a chance—lightning never strikes twice. This, however, is romantic comedy, the first principle of which is that lightning will do whatever you want it to; just pick your favorite conductor. Annie, for instance, is driving along when she hears Sam's voice on the car radio, and, darn it, she just knows that, whoever this guy is, he's the one. Unlike her fiancé, Walter (Bill Pullman), who is anything but the one. He may even qualify as a total nobody, for all the help that Ephron gives him. She's normally generous with her minor characters, but Walter is just a blank wall for Annie to bounce off. Why not smarten him up with a lick of charm, like Gig Young in “Teacher's Pet”? When he came between Clark Gable and Doris Day, their need for each other was sharpened by the competition.

But Ephron doesn't want rivalry, or any other human impediment. There's a whole continent separating these two, and that's enough. “Sleepless in Seattle” is a gentle meditation on fate, on what must come to pass, but there's no hint of a genial God pulling strings from on high; it's up to the characters to plot their own course toward a triumphant union. Nothing ever goes wrong between Sam and Annie, because nothing goes on at all. The movie simply presumes that all will be well; it's too busy dreaming of perfection to dream of anything else. Sam is actually in the middle of saying the word “perfect” when he first catches sight of Annie, drifting silently by in virginal white. It's like Dante getting his first eyeful of Beatrice.

Ephron wants her movie to look the part, all rich and heady with promise. Enter Sven Nykvist as cameraman, who beefs up the colors with the same gusto that he brought to “Fanny and Alexander”; like Bergman's movie, “Sleepless in Seattle” has the plush feel of a story that has already happened and is now being recollected in tranquillity. What it gains in pleasure it loses in suspense, and awkward practicalities are glazed over with ease; the characters' flights across America are traced in glowing dots against a map of nocturnal blue. Trouble starts, however, when the story needs to snap out of that relaxation. On the street one day, Sam tries to prove to a friend—a jovial cameo from Rob Reiner—that

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

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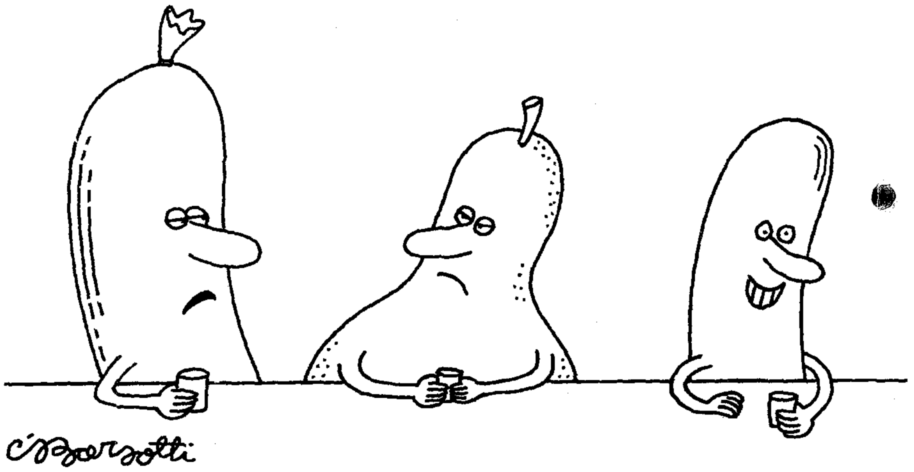
he's still in good enough shape to woo the girls. Nykvist frames the whole scene in long shot, but he should have held it back for the clinching gag—Reiner leaning over solemnly to inspect Hanks' butt. Ephron wanted it kept simple, presumably, but her lack of trust in the camera, in its ability to snatch a laugh merely by changing position, tends to stanch the movie's flow.

It's the old story: the writer who wants to direct, who goes on thinking in words when there are images begging to help out. The last twenty minutes of "Sleepless in Seattle" make you weep with frustration. It's New York, the Empire State Building is beckoning, and Sam and Annie are approaching zero hour. And what does Ephron do? She stops to give Annie a final scene with Walter, who was forgettable to start with and certainly shouldn't be clogging up the action this late. But Ephron is so fond of a good line—and hers are some of the best around—that she can't bear to see it go to waste; you keep hoping she'll cut away and leave her scenes on a high, but they dawdle on like smoky parties that no one has the energy to leave.

Which brings us to the question: How funny is "Sleepless in Seattle"? There always seem to be jokes around the next bend, but somehow the movie doesn't need to get there; it's happy to glisten with charm rather than buzz with life, to make an audience feel cozy and concerned. I like my romantic comedies to wake me up, but this one put me to sleep with its sweet mooching reverie, much of it secondhand. Ephron is a magpie of useful tunes, all of them guaranteed to put lumps in throats. We may have expected Nat King Cole, but not "As Time Goes By" over the opening credits. Has the woman no shame? None at all, plainly, although she's clever enough to realize that we don't have any, either. We watch sympathetically as Annie and a friend burst into tears during a discussion of the old Cary Grant weepie "An Affair to Remember." We even see a short clip for ourselves, which may not be a good idea. For one thing, any Cary Grant film always looks better than whatever you're watching. And, for another, what does it say about a movie that its funniest and most delicious moment comes from the fond remembrance of cinema? Maybe Ephron is so cushioned in celluloid that she can't conceive of any adventures still waiting out there in the fresh air.

Poor Meg Ryan feels the brunt of this. When Annie first learns about Sam on the radio, she sniffs away a few tears. Fair enough, this is an old-style dating movie—what can you expect? But then, much later, when the talk-show host plays highlights of the season and Sam's appeal is one of them, that old look crosses Annie's face all over again. Is Nora Ephron really so unsure of the emotions served up by this tale that she has to dole out second helpings? It's a mild insult to the audience (pay attention this time, children) and a gross one to Meg Ryan, hardly an actress who thrives on repetition. She's a one-off, once-only performer, with a breathtaking recovery rate; what I loved about the orgasm scene in "When Harry Met Sally . . ." was that when the howls of bliss died away, the smile clicked back on like a torch. When she's on a roll, the



"It doesn't have a damn thing to do with political correctness, pal. I'm a sausage, and that guy's a wienie."

ditsiness flies off her without warning—she's no more prepared for it than anyone else is. "Sleepless in Seattle" takes off at the moment when Annie starts dunking a tea bag and trying to chatter at the same time. It's almost too much for her whirring brain. But the movie never gives Ryan enough to do, and her face often settles into moping; it takes on the sadness of a spoiled child, which doesn't suit her any more than her sensible plaited hair style.

The best reason to see "Sleepless in Seattle" is Tom Hanks, but then he's always the best reason to see a movie. Only once has everything fallen into place around him: in Penny Marshall's "Big," where he took the central conceit—a child's soul padlocked in an adult body—and turned it into a rhapsody, way beyond anything that Marshall could have expected. He played not just a part but a set of variations on the theme of being a person; he showed us how we meet the world head on and learn to ride the bumps, except that in his case two decades of adjustment were squeezed into a couple of hours—a time-lapse image of moral growth. What's more, he cut the real adults down to size: their sneers and ambitions suddenly seemed like ghosts of playground energy. No other actor could have kept this up; it would have sagged into sentimentality, a loving look at the child within. But Hanks gave us the child without, the surface fizz, and in "Sleepless in Seattle" the effervescence still hasn't died down. When Sam asks Jonah where Baltimore is on the map and gets no answer, he bursts like a firecracker—"*There's* Baltimore," hitting the word with a cowhand's wild yelp—and we feel a blast from his past, a funny little gale of impatience. It cracks the moodiness that Ephron is trying to lay over the whole movie, but, more important, it tells you that Sam is still boyish enough to get off on the shock of falling in love—he won't go all sensible and mature on us.

The looks help, of course. Hanks will never be a smoothie—how could he be, with that topping of sprung curls?—but he has the smoothie's ability to stop the clock; at present, he could pass for anything between twenty and forty. He still has the scalp-lifting grin and the rubbery, filleted frame, which can stretch with glee or crumple in distress—he could snap on a bow tie and wander into a Thurber cartoon, no questions asked. Together with Steve Martin, he is the best physical comedian of his generation, although both of them are left floundering by their directors. You have to go to the cheaper, crummier movies, where Hanks is left alone with his lunacy, to catch him at his most nimble; next time "The Money Pit" comes around on TV, stay with it until he climbs the disintegrating staircase, each step dying under his footfall. Needless to say, Nora Ephron is above this kind of thing. She prefers to have Tom Hanks stand still in the moonlight. Yet the old mobility hasn't vanished—it's just all gone to his face. There's a quickness there, a skirmish of unlikely feelings that ranges well beyond the farcical, toward the more searching comedy of weakness and doubt.

It's no surprise that he should play off so neatly against the children in this movie: they seem tuned in to his channels of thought. Malinger is persuasive as Jonah, but the real pro is Gaby Hoffmann, as Jonah's friend Jessica. I have mixed feelings about child stars, believing firmly, for instance, that Macaulay Culkin should be shut in a damp cellar until the end of the century; but Hoffmann, already so assured in Ephron's previous picture, "This Is My Life," now finds a higher and unnerving level of sophistication. "H. and G.," she drawls at Sam, who doesn't get it. "Hi and goodbye." Ephron turns the wisdom of experience on its head: the Sams of this world are now confused and afraid, the Jessicas sassy and controlled. (If this is true, we're in deep trouble.) And most of the plot is orchestrated by Jonah; he's the sensible Cupid who brings the foolish couple together.

Hanks doesn't forget this when, in the final scene, he is suddenly presented with the love of his life. So far, it's been soul to soul; now they are face to face, and you can feel the threat of schmalz overhead. But it never comes, because Hanks doesn't melt: he flinches. It's a tiny, sideways swivel of the head, no more than a tic of disbelief, as if to say "Are you kidding?" But it's enough: here is the grownup side of him talking to the childish, to the Jonah-like, pointing out that life is not a movie, that destiny is a joke, that things like this don't happen to ordinary Americans. For half a second, he defies the laws of romantic comedy, refusing to play the game. Resistance, however, is useless, as it always will be; and, besides, Meg Ryan is waiting. ♦

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THE THEATRE

SIGHT UNSEEN

BY JOHN LAHR

THE glories of Dublin's Abbey Theatre are not architectural. From the outside, it's a dumpy, unpromising building a few blocks off O'Connell Street, the noisy main drag, where the memories of great political protests hang as thick as wishes in the air. Inside the theatre, lining the walls that lead, inevitably, to the bar, are portraits of the artists who have contributed to its legend—W. B. Yeats, Brendan Behan, Cyril Cusack, and the current jewel in the theatre's literary crown, Brian Friel, whose newest play, "Wonderful Tennessee," opened on June 30th. A Friel play is a national event, and the first night of "Wonderful Tennessee" was reported on the front page of the *Irish Times* and was attended by the President and the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic and by a battery of Cabinet panjandrums. On the second night, Friel himself was at the bar, looking ruddier and more owlish than the cigar-smoking portrait of him, which was just over his shoulder. He declined to discuss his new play, claiming a hangover after the buoyant local reviews.

Friel is a master; and the new play, a followup to his international hit "Dancing at Lughnasa," is a stylistic but not a thematic departure, attempting in a new theatrical language to incarnate spiritual grace. In the previous play, dancing became a bridge to some acknowledgment of the mystical—"as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things, to be in touch with some otherness." In "Wonderful Tennessee," that otherness takes the form of an actual place—an island called Oileán Draíochta, which one of the characters translates as "Island of Otherness, Island of Mystery." On a summer's night, three partying middle-aged couples wait in vain, singing and telling stories, to be ferried there from a remote pier in northwest Donegal. Their singing, like the dancing in "Lughnasa," is emblematic for Friel of the struggle to get beyond orthodoxy to faith—an exercise not just to "kill time" but to inform the heart.

Significantly, "Wonderful Tennessee" begins and ends in the silence of a windswept coast—"an environment," according to the stage directions, "of deep tranquillity and peace." Friel establishes the moral debate of his play in the opening few seconds. The lights come up on Joe Vaněk's stunning set, a dilapidated two-tier concrete pier, which stretches nearly the width of the stage and is dominated at its center by a cruciform life-belt stand, with old ropes and a desiccated life belt hanging from it. The revellers who will inhabit this derelict arena are heard approaching long before they are seen. "Lost. Help! We're lost!" are the play's first words, which waft onto the vastness from offstage. Are they lost? The evening is dedicated to testing the certainty of this desolation.

The island has been bought "sight unseen" by the leader of the group, a bookie and concert promoter named Terry Martin (Donal McCann), who is the first onstage, and stares out at it on the horizon while holding his panama hat worshipfully over his heart. The others soon invade the stage in a frantic conga line, which brings them rumbustiously down from their tour bus and onto the pier—heads rolling and arms flying. "A hint of the maenadic," the stage directions say. Almost immediately, they're singing "I Want to Be Happy"; but the air is filled with the static of human complaint.

Terry's neurotic wife, Berna (Ingrid Craigie), a lawyer, has had a breakdown. She ends the first scene poignantly singing about the Immaculate Heart and ends the second by jumping off the pier wall into the sea. Terry's sister, Trish (Marion O'Dwyer), nurses her husband, George (Robert Black), who is dying of throat cancer and provides joyous accordion music. Berna's sister, Angela (the sardonic and powerful Catherine Byrne), a classicist by profession, is being hotly pursued by Terry and confides to him that "getting through the day is as much as I can handle." She is idealized by her frustrated husband, Frank (the droll John Kavanagh), who has been freed from his mundane day job by Terry's financial support. Frank has pinned his hopes for a "breakthrough" on his improbably titled magnum opus, "The Measurement of Time and Its Effect on European Civilisation," and in the early hours he confesses to being one of "the goddamn failures . . . Husband—father—provider—worthless."

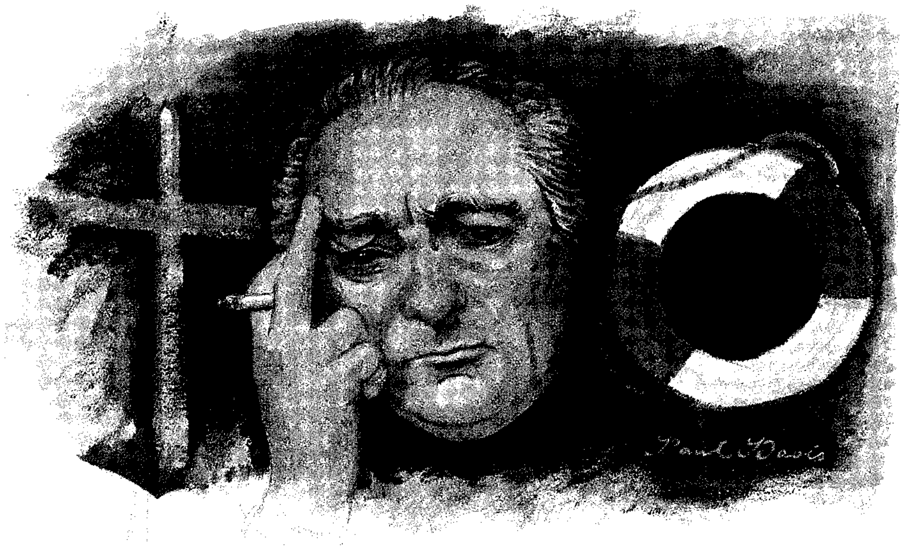
The play is a brilliantly notated fugue of laughter and lament, in which Friel's visions of Heaven and Hell vie to assert themselves. Here, for instance, in short strokes of asides and furtive glances, Terry inspects the abundance of a picnic hamper while, nearby, Berna confides the impoverishment of their marriage to her sister:

> Terry: Marinated Quail and Quince Jelly. God!
> Trish: The delights of the world—you have them all there.
> Angela: There are times when all of us—
> Berna: He has no happiness with me—Terry. Not even "about to be happiness."

The island, once the home of St. Conall and now a place of pilgrimage, offers a mythic counterpoint to the material anxieties of their lives. It's hard to see, and none of them can agree on its exact position or quite get it in focus. These unwitting pilgrims pick over the island's past and contemplate the ritual function of prayer and penance and the need, as Trish says, "to attest to the mystery." This brings a smile to Terry's face. "And why not!" he says. "I'm a bookie for God's sake." A gambler by instinct as well as by profession, Terry has wagered not just on the island but on faith, which is a defiant commitment to the unknown. "Believe me" is a frequent part of his litany. He has organized the outing and paid for it, and assures his friends that the ferryman will arrive. "He'll come. Believe me," he says. As they wait and talk, the island becomes an embodiment of hope, the wonderful Tennessee of the title, which is echoed in a song they sing:

> Come, my love, come, my boat lies low,
> She lies high and dry on the O-hi-o.

As in the song, this stranded collection of lost souls lives in hope of safe harbor. They try to manufacture contentment in their songs and stories. The ferry never shows up, the island is never reached. On the surface, anyway, their trip is, as one of them observes, a "useless, endless, unhappy outing." But as the group bears witness to mystery its collective sense of life is deepened. Berna tells a fantastical story about a flying house and defends it by recollecting a law professor dubbed Offense to Reason, who thought reason was the key to truth. "A flying house . . . marches up to reason and belts it across the gob and says to it, 'Fuck you reason. I'm as good as you any day. You haven't all the fucking answers—not by any means,' " she says. "That's why I like it. . . . It's stupid, futile defiance."



Brian Friel charts a landscape of faith in "Wonderful Tennessee."

"Wonderful Tennessee" is a similar act of defiance: a defense—some have said a misguided one—not so much of illusion as of the miraculous. Oileán Draíochta reawakens the characters' ancestral sense of the sacred—the longing to go beyond the vanity of despair and to acknowledge even in pain the wonder of life. The experience makes them believers. "Even if we don't get there," Trish says of the Island of Mystery, "well at least we know . . . it's there." Friel shows them unconsciously recapitulating the island's rituals. A game of stones that Trish plays in the second act gradually turns into a piling up of stones—"doing the *túras*," which, the program explains, was part of the ritual of pilgrimage to Inishkeel Island—and is accompanied by other vestigial ritual gestures, like the taking off of shoes and socks, doing the "rounds" by walking around the *túras* at least three times, and bottling water from the "holy well," which in this case is a puddle of rainwater. In the manner of pilgrims, the group hangs scarves, pieces of cloth, a bouquet of wildflowers on the life-belt stand. Each touches it before leaving the hallowed ground and travelling back to the unholy world. Friel sounds one final note of defiance. Angela, the agnostic, vows to return to the place every year: "Not out of need—out of desire! Not in expectation—but to attest, to affirm, to acknowledge—to shout Yes, Yes, Yes! Damn right we will, Terry! Yes—yes—yes!" She puts her sun hat at the top of the life-belt stand, giving the cross an intimation of human form. She exits with George, who is playing his accordion, and the two of them jauntily refuse death its dominion as they "loudly, joyously, happily" sing the play's title song.

Friel's allegory is unavoidably schematic. Despite the power of his poetry and his shrewd construction, the play's meaning seems more imposed by the author than earned by the characters, who are given problems but only a patina of personality. Friel's appeal to the heart is made largely through the head. (Even the respectful second-night Dublin audience gave the play only two curtain calls.) The director, Patrick Mason, makes an elegant asset of this limitation by mounting the play in a style as defiantly formalized as Friel's parable. His friezelike staging denies the expectation of depth and the comfort of naturalism. He places his actors on diagonals, which emphasize their silhouettes and exaggerate every turn of the head and body. "From my point of view, the intention is that the life of the interstices—the spaces between the characters, the connection of looks—is what's important," he told me. "Everyone has to be precisely placed. Every look, every gesture, every tableau has to be filled with narrative." Mason, who has had a long-standing superb collaboration with Friel, quoted the playwright: "We have a dialogue here on this island between ourselves. If we are overheard and understood then that's icing on the cake." Mason added, " 'Wonderful Tennessee' is part of that dialogue. When the characters lift those stones, when they touch those cloths, there are generations stirring in the air of this theatre. I know it. I feel it every night. People know it in their bones."

Mason's production of "Dancing at Lughnasa" has gone around the world; and "Wonderful Tennessee" is scheduled to open on Broadway, at the Plymouth Theatre, in October. Its arrival on the island of Manhattan is as problematic as the arrival of Friel's pilgrims on the Island of Mystery. Broadway, which sanctifies profit, not prophecy, has lost a sense of what or how to celebrate. Whether the living heart of faith can be grafted on the dead body of American show business is anybody's guess. "I'm not giving up," Terry says, ever hopeful of success in the journey. "Two-one against. Even money." I'd say the odds for "Wonderful Tennessee" 's surviving more than a heartbeat on Broadway are longer than that. But I hope it reaches its destination, and wins the hard and important battle to be heard. ♦

PAUL DAVIS

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MUSICAL EVENTS

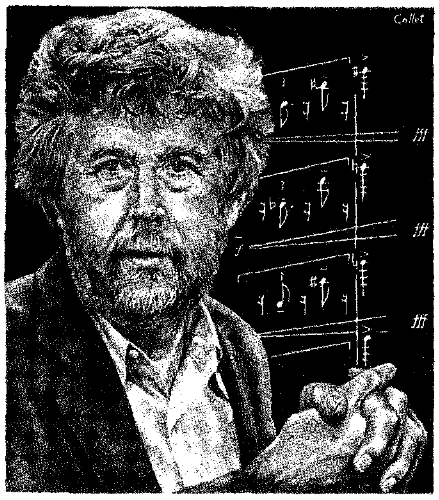
HARRISON BIRTWISTLE'S HANDS

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

HERE was the composer, sitting on the stage of the Festival Hall in London, an hour or so before the first performance of his latest big work, "Antiphonies," for piano and orchestra, a massive, wild, and wonder-filled half-hour piece, commissioned by donors on behalf of the Philharmonia and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras. He was there for a panel discussion—plainly not his favorite means of expression. His two hands, on his lap, pulled at each other stiffly, fist jerking over one finger, then another, while he waited, and while others spoke. They all seemed to know so much more about his music than he did. James MacMillan, the young Scots composer who was chairing the exchange, talked about the way Harrison Birtwistle's music gives the impression of being at once proudly new and defiantly ancient. Joanna MacGregor, who was to play the solo piano part in the new piece, described the music's density. Pierre Boulez, the evening's conductor, explained how that density is made up of layers: "tiled" music, he called it, where thematic material could jump up or down from one layer of tiles to another, so that there could be continuity and disjunction at once. But foremost, said Mr. Boulez, was the power, "a very strong way of telling things, and of telling things which are very personal."

All this was sure and true. None of it, though, eased the embarrassment of the composer, whose hands continued their anxious dry washing of themselves, except when he was called on to speak, and so needed them to hold and show and measure his music in the space in front of him. Even then, his words were faltering and his wit awkward. Introducing a few sections he'd picked to have played by Ms. MacGregor, Mr. Boulez, and the Philharmonia during this introductory session, he remarked that he didn't know why he had chosen some bits rather than others: "They were all equally good." When he had to talk specifically about his first example, he lapsed almost into incoherence.

"O.K., well . . . we're going to play the first page of the piece . . . and . . . [sigh] . . . really . . . [sigh] . . . really to explain music is very hard. Um . . . it's, it— I suppose an analogy would be, is, is like, it's like opening a door on something that's already happening."



"Antiphonies," the composer's latest major work, makes its world première in London.

EDWARD COLLET

There it was at last: the sudden window onto the piece, after so many uncomfortable seconds. Mr. Birtwistle still finds words bothersome, for all the length and the scale of his success (he won music's Nobel Prize, the University of Louisville's Grawemeyer Award, in 1987), and for all the magisterial command over language he shows in his operas and songs. In a public forum, or even sometimes in a private conversation, he can appear like a fish out of water—or, more, given his strong, rounded shape, stillness of posture, and rough beard, like a bear at bay.

In his music, miraculously, the laboring effort to communicate and the flush of articulacy occur at once. This is music that typically sounds heavy with its own birth, struggling to bring something to expression. And yet the struggle, the heaviness, is what is to be expressed. There isn't, as there is when Mr. Birtwistle speaks, the sense of a blocked message. The blockage is the message. The feeling in the best, biggest pieces—of which the new "Antiphonies" is certainly one—is that we're waiting for something momentous to take place, and at the same time experiencing that momentous thing. Both are possible because of the power to which Mr. Boulez alluded: the power that creates immense impedance and, simultaneously, the force to overcome it. The impedance is principally harmonic thickness and lethargy; the force comes from urgent, pushing rhythm, or from insistent repetition, or from music's being squeezed through at the extreme edges, in the acute high treble or the lowering far bass.

Until quite recently, there was another obstruction in the way of Mr. Birtwistle's music: the scarcity of recordings. But that has been alleviated by releases that have made available many of his larger works, and provide "Antiphonies" with a context. For a composer whose concert works are as dramatic as his operas, that context begins with his two previous pieces for a similar cast of soloist plus orchestra: "Melencolia I" (titled after a Dürer engraving of Melancholy as a female geometer), for clarinet, harp, and strings, which has been recorded by Antony Pay as part of a Birtwistle collection (NMC D009), and "Endless Parade," for trumpet, vibraphone, and strings, played by Håkan Hardenberger on a Philips record (already out of print).

These two pieces, parallel in instrumentation, are like dark and light sisters. "Melencolia I" is an almost continuous monologue for the clarinet, a monologue of long, brooding melody and fierce outbursts, with the harp as companion (ally, rival, or persecutor) and the strings as a landscape for the two figures—or perhaps a seascape, in moods variously of complex turmoil and wide calm. It's one of Mr. Birtwistle's finest achievements, and the recorded performance does it proud. "Endless Parade," written a decade later, in 1986-87, is similarly a soliloquy, but one made up of fanfares and brilliance from the trumpet, gilded by the vibraphone, with the strings now more subserviently placed as foil and audience.

"Antiphonies" is different again, perhaps for the fundamental reason that the piano isn't an instrument for melody, and so this can't be a work of solo instrumental song with chorus. To take account of the multifacetedness of the new soloist, the orchestra is enriched to full symphonic proportions; also, the relationship between solo and ensemble is much more complex. Where the clarinet and the trumpet in the earlier works stood apart from their backgrounds, the piano of "Antiphonies" is integrated into the orchestra. It's aligned with harps, vibraphones, bells, and glockenspiels, whose bright resonances can connect further with the sounds of high woodwinds and violin harmonics; it's also joined to a wood-percussion group of marimbas and temple blocks to make a clattering orchestra within the orchestra. But the piano is seen, too, as separate: an alternative space in which ideas can appear and develop as if in monochrome form.

This is how a great deal of the antiphony of "Antiphonies" takes place: in transfers of thematic material between orchestra and piano. On the opening page, for instance, the piano flickers into life with chords that are doubled or imitated by orchestral ensembles. Subsequent interchanges concern more substantial bodies of music, such as a four-part counterpoint that swivels between airy woodwind and busy piano soon after the beginning, or else involve more sharply characterized entities, like a brusque, rising interjection that is the trombones' only contribution to this initial phase of the work, and that the piano obediently repeats each time, seemingly with increasing irritation.

The motif soon disappears. As Mr. Birtwistle remarked during the discussion beforehand, "I tend to use musical ideas like a child playing with toys: when I get bored with them, I just forget them." Of course, the casualness is disingenuous: we lose the trombones' brutish interruption just when it's threatening to become intolerably nagging. But at the same time this is a composer who does seem to make his music with ideas and decisions that are in some ways capricious, while being in others absolutely precise. The trombone signal is a case in point. It's always the same in rhythm, shape, and prominence, but the notes are subtly changed each time, for no obvious reason. Rigid repetition is combined with haphazard alteration, as so often in Mr. Birtwistle's music. There's a middle level of obvious pattern—the level of repeated notes, or chords, or motifs—while the lower level of detail and the upper level of large-scale form provide no simple answer to scrutiny.

The formal complexity has to do with those tiled layers of which Mr. Boulez spoke. There are strata in "Antiphonies" that seem to be always present, even though they may in fact come into hearing only intermittently. One is a slow, deep song of the tuba, a song that may be taken up by other instruments of the distant bass. Then, there are events that happen only once, appear to come almost from nowhere, and contribute to the feeling of constant, turbulent self-renewal and discovery. One is a sequence of huge deflations, where fortissimo chords for the entire orchestra lapse toward silence through downward slides. Another is a set of quiet, lifting gestures for the strings, divided into thirty parts to create widely spread harmonies at once monumental and mysterious. Yet another is the unison middle-register A that arrives to signal the end of the race of incidents, and still another the beginning of that end, with a long melody confidently breezing in high woodwinds while the piano has been left behind to idle.

There was a time when Mr. Birtwistle's forms were episodic, like those of Stravinsky or Messiaen, as some of his early titles suggest: "Refrains and Choruses," "Verses for Ensembles." In "Antiphonies," though, it's as if the pellucid fragments of those earlier works were being piled on top of one another, or as if a simple verse-refrain structure, an elementary antiphony, were being refracted through a musical prism. Some of the examples in the pre-concert demonstration were given with the layers laid bare: with just the winds and percussion playing, or just the strings. And they sounded so much clearer that way. But the essential challenge of this music is that of monitoring more hectic musical traffic, and in that respect "Antiphonies" is a successor not so much to the two earlier solo-ensemble pieces as to Mr. Birtwistle's magnificent last piece for large orchestra, "Earth Dances," available on another recent record (Collins Classics 20012). What "Earth Dances" was to "The Rite of Spring," "Antiphonies" is to "Petrushka."

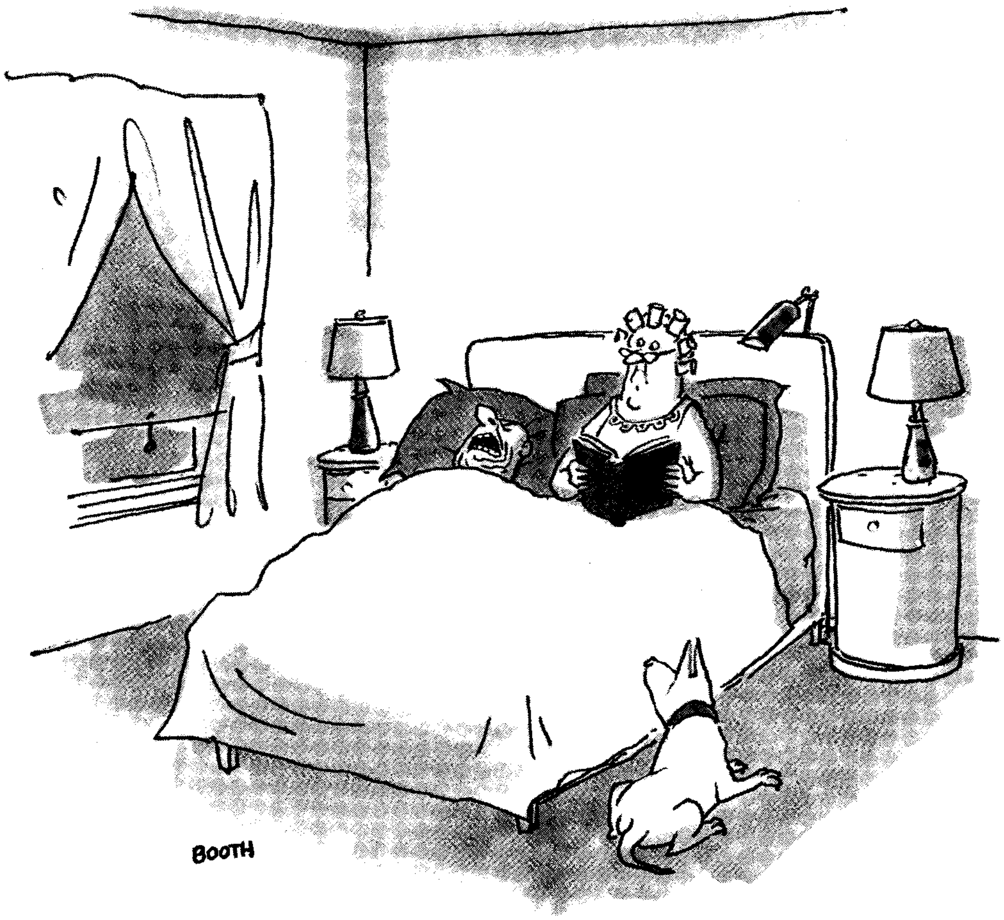
The comparison with Stravinsky is justified on the ground not only of mosaic structure and objectivity (Mr. Birtwistle has talked about wanting his music to have "a formal voice") but also of drama, of what Mr. Birtwistle has often referred to as "role-playing" for instruments. Where Stravinsky in composing "Petrushka" saw "a puppet . . . exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios," "Antiphonies" presents multiple characters: the tuba humming to itself, the first trumpet remembering the assertive, instigating force of "Endless Parade," the piccolos revolving slowly around each other in high air they share only with the top of the piano and with the violins. In other cases, there's more than one role for an instrument or a group, and especially for the solo piano, which seems to switch voices in order to outwit the orchestra in a running game to gain possession of the musical material. (The part cries out for the strength and the focussed intelligence of a Pollini.) Except for moments of luminous truce, the game between soloist and orchestra is played with canniness, pouncing speed, and bared claws: the composer's reference to child's play is apropos.

What further validates that image of the composer and his toys is the external nature of the musical playthings he picks up, handles, and discards throughout "Antiphonies"—the sense that they enter the piece from outside. Often, they do: it has always been characteristic of Mr. Birtwistle that he snatches ideas from one piece for another, and "Antiphonies" includes more than one reference to the arresting way "Earth Dances" starts, with a quake and a collapse in the orchestra's bass grounding. But there's also a personal outsideness, that of a composer who's been able to keep himself apart from the traditions, so he can come to a conventional medium, the piano concerto, as if it were as alien as Mayan temple architecture. There is, too, an externality intrinsic in his ideas, a matter of the detachment with which they're made and used. Just as he is more the committed observer of his own music than the voicing origin, so we feel his instruments to be vehicles more of action than expression. They don't propose the music; rather, the music is proposed through them. The player can be passionately involved, as Mr. Pay is in "Melencolia I," and yet he still doesn't sing for himself; he's buffeted by musical forces that are as alien and as unpredictable as the weather.

The sense of enactment in Mr. Birtwistle's music is thus fully compatible with its struggle into existence, and also with its unusual combination of lucidity and ignorance, expressed in the coexistence of pattern and randomness. The musical weather—the meteorology of harmony most of all—he treats as an intractable given; he then makes his instruments play in it as best they can. There was some suspicion that in his opera "Gawain," produced at Covent Garden two years ago, he'd begun to know how to create his own storms: the music was often unusually self-conscious in its drive to illustrate the libretto, as may be judged from "Gawain's Journey"—virtually a tone poem adapted from the score, and recorded by Elgar Howarth (on Collins Classics 13872, along with "The Triumph of Time," a prime Birtwistle score dating from 1971-72). "Antiphonies," however, affirms a return to the older manner, in which the music's purposes are not so easily defined, and in which the composer seems to be tackling enormous forces that he and his players can only learn to live with, not control.

As Mr. Birtwistle continues his progress, so his strategies for living with upheaval become more precise. "Antiphonies" is his most virtuoso piece of orchestration to date, having a fastidiousness of effect that entered his music in the late nineteen-eighties (the Rilke song "An die Musik" marked the change) and appears now in an orchestral concert work for the first time. Aligned with this delicacy is a new accuracy and speed in the instrumental role-playing, repeated in a wind quintet written immediately after "Antiphonies": "Five Distances for Five Instruments." One waits eagerly to hear how this keenness of instrumental drama will transfer into the theatre in Mr. Birtwistle's next opera, "The Second Mrs. Kong," with a libretto by Russell Hoban, due to be performed by Glyndebourne next year.

Right at the end of the introduction to "Antiphonies," Mr. Birtwistle told a story that said everything about his robustly practical but slantwise approach to composition, his fidelity to his material, and his ability to pursue a task logically without inquiring about premises that anyone else might find hopelessly and vexingly arbitrary: "I began by going to the piano, and putting my hands down, and playing a chord. Then I investigated it, and learned how to make more of it." He held up his hands to show us. That's how it was done. ♦



"She leaves wooden-handled knives soaking in the dishwater all night long, Your Honor."

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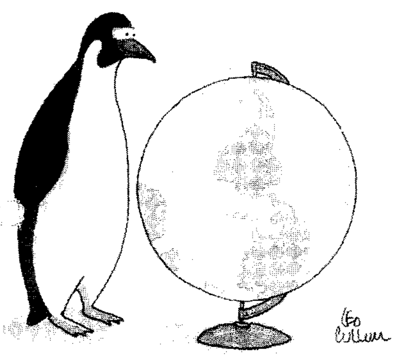

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Nobody's Fool

by Richard Russo
(Random House; $23)

NORTH BATH, NEW YORK, is a small town of fainthearted boosters, the kind of place where the houses seem to have grown farther apart as the years have passed and native optimism has dwindled. This patient, affectionate novel is about one winter month in one resident's sixtieth year. Donald Sullivan—Sully—is nobody's fool; a day laborer on partial disability, he is still the village wise-ass and the custodian of his own bad luck, living on a shoestring in a flat above Miss Beryl Peoples, a retired eighth-grade teacher. Sully plays the same trifecta every day at OTB, eats at Hattie's Lunch, drinks with his lawyer—a one-legged alcoholic who lives on pickled eggs—and pals around with Rub Squeers, whose brain is as empty as the glove box in a new car. And yet there's a kind of sullen good cheer about Sully that's very winning. He's reminiscent, in a way, of Bellow's old men, but without their sophistication or their sometimes desperate impulsion. Like the novel in which he appears, he moves slowly, yet one never tires of watching him, because he has the capacity to make everyone around him feel better, including the reader.

GENERAL

Faith in a Seed

by Henry D. Thoreau
(Island Press; $25)

MANY of Thoreau's late writings have remained unpublished until now. The reason, one learns from Gary Paul Nabhan's insightful foreword, is that literary critics dismiss Thoreau's post-Walden writings on natural history—including the centerpiece of this volume, a treatise entitled "The Dispersion of Seeds"—as mere "technical writing," while naturalists fault his sometimes less than accurate taxonomy. Overlooked in the process is an essential precept of the Transcendentalists: that all is connectedness. Divisions between science and poetry, between the study of nature and the knowledge of self, are man's conceits; the true task is not specialization but synthesis. Nevertheless, rigor has its place, and Thoreau is meticulous here in detailing the patterns by which birds, squirrels, wind, and water disperse the seeds of trees and thereby plant and nurture the forests of his beloved Concord. The resulting portrait of a self-regulating ecosystem anticipates the studies of present-day ecologists, and though the text demands the reader's concentration, Thoreau's long-standing gift for epigrams remains intact. Of summer's arrival he writes, "The season of hope and promise is passed, and already the season of small fruits has arrived. We are a little saddened because we begin to see the interval between our hopes and their fulfillment."

Con Brio: Four Russians Called the Budapest String Quartet

by Nat Brandt
(Oxford; $25)

THIS diverting contribution to American musical history begins in Europe, where a by now familiar combination of cultural achievement and political ineptitude created a corps of brilliantly trained musicians and then set them adrift after the First World War. The original quartet was composed of three Hungarians and a Dutchman who fled to Berlin to escape the chaos in Hungary. One by one, its members headed off to separate careers and, one by one, were replaced by Russian Jews who had moved to Germany, and who on the eve of the Second World War arrived in this country. The Budapest's performances immediately thrilled American critics, and over the decades their playing expanded the audience for chamber music in this country and inspired a younger generation of American chamber players.

FROM OUR PAGES

Mourning Doves, a collection of stories by Judy Troy, has been published by Scribners ($20). Some of the stories originally appeared in *The New Yorker.* ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

INGREDIENTS

BY CHARLIE VARON

WHAT'S in this Bing & Cherry's Ice Cream? There's FRESH CREAM from the dairy just the other side of the creek—not Dickerson Creek but the creek that flows past where Jud Purdy's cabin used to stand. We drive it back *slow* in our 1934 Chevy pickup, in big wooden kegs with old plaid blankets on top to keep it cool. We know the cows who are lending us this cream; we insist on that. They're all union cattle, of course. There's Red Emma, who's a brown Hereford—well, actually more of a reddish brown—and Frida, sort of the long-suffering type, which isn't too surprising for a Holstein, and Rainbow Warrior, the friendly Black Angus, whose milk is so rich that we've dedicated ten per cent of her cream to be sold over the counter to help save the offshore California kelp forest.

There's EGG WHITES. Yes, time was when we had our own flock of hens right out in back, clucking and scratching just the way they did back when we didn't know the meaning of the word "packaging," but now that we've got so big in this business—thanks, folks—we've had to move out and buy some eggs from across the valley, from the Dovin family, who have a special feeling for Rhode Island Reds, and from other folks around these parts. The eggs are all different grades and sizes. Some are brown and some are white and some are speckled, but they're all from free-range birds, and when we've cracked them open and mixed them together we feel right in step with the Rio treaty on biodiversity. The wooden eggbeater we use has come down through three generations of Bing's family. As for all those bad-cholesterol yolks, we don't just throw them out, the way some premium-ice-cream folks are known to do: we dispose of them responsibly, in a manner respectful of our neighbors and our earth, donating them to a start-up custard coöperative down in Brattleboro.

SUGAR. Well, what would life be without a little sugar now and then? We don't overdo it, we don't shovel it in, because we believe it's more the *idea* of sugar that has made ice cream America's favorite comfort food. We don't use Domino, for political connotations we need not discuss here. We do use white sugar and sugar of color, in percentages we alter in a blind-choice procedure that is now being studied by some other socially aware coöperatives across our country. As we stir and blend both sugars, we utter a simple affirmation about the healing power of sweets. We are also working on a sugar-free ice cream, for which we expect great things once we figure out the appropriate natural artificial sweetener.

NONFAT MILK SOLIDS is stuff we make ourselves from the nonfat milk we get down at the 7-Eleven in those convenient plastic half-gallon jugs, and then set out to dry in the hot, comforting Vermont summer sun.

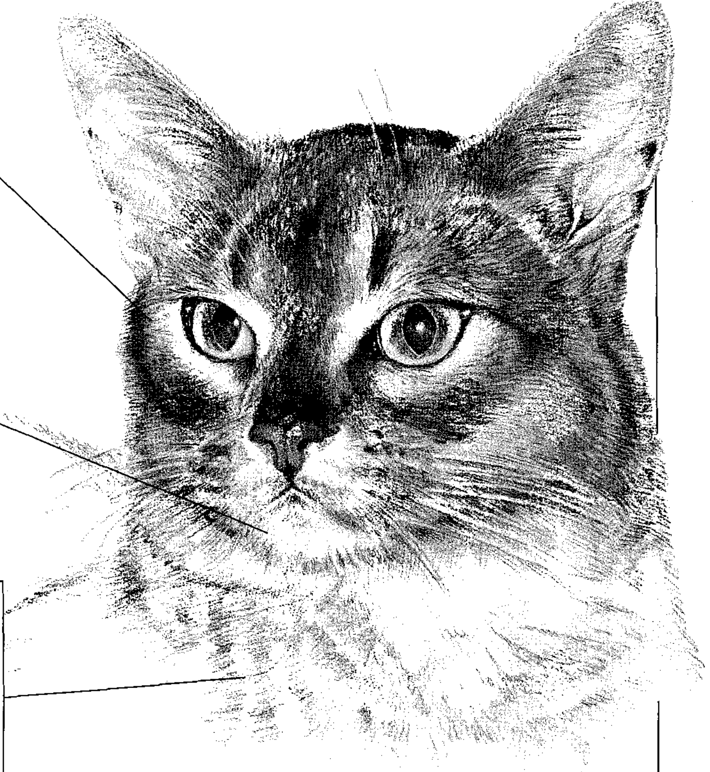
WHEY. Our founding co-partner Dave Cherry handles all the whey around here. Like other native-born Vermonters, he's pretty closemouthed, so we never ask about his whey sources. We kid him about having a little arrangement with the good folks at Carnation, but Dave can get real sullen if you push him, so we knock it off quick. In any case, the price of our whey is always low, and we pass those savings directly along to you.

FLAVORS. Our Triple Überchocolate contains hand-crumbled homemade brownie remnants, Oreo® exterior cookie shavings, and stone-ground Mr. Goodbar® meal. Our Neo-Neapolitan contains young coconut, unsweetened carob, and organic cranberry puree. Our Herb Tea 'N' Cream contains hibiscus flowers, ginseng, chicory root, wild rose hips, and kibberwort pods, brewed in imported Evian® water. Our Minty Almonchino contains mint-almond-cappuccino chunks, hand-cut organic almond slivers, naturally fatigued top-stalk mint leaves, and concentrated coffee goo from south-slope Nicaraguan beans. (The Flavor Department, by the way, is real excited about our upcoming new line of culturally diverse ice creams. Watch this space for news of Maize-Raisin Crunch, Red Beans and Rice, Mango Wheatberry, and Dim Sum Cookie Dough.)

Add lots of UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, and that's what's in this container of Bing & Cherry's Virtually Homemade Ice Cream—nothing more, nothing less. Thanks for supporting our company!

Try our delicious Gourmet Frozen Yogurt, 1% fat for peace. ♦

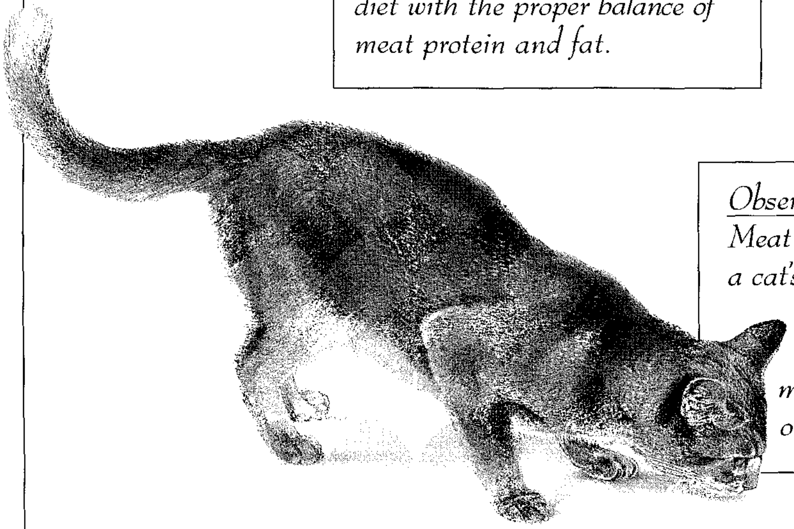
A thorough examination of why the more meat in IAMS matters.



Look your cat in the eye. Iams, with more meat protein, helps keep eyes clear.

Notice what your cat likes to eat. Because, instinctively, cats crave the taste of meat. So you and your cat should like the fact that Iams contains more meat protein.

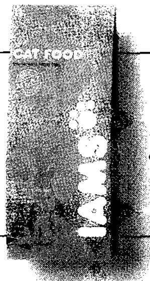
Evaluate the look and feel of your cat's coat. A luxurious coat and healthy skin come from a diet with the proper balance of meat protein and fat.



Observe how your cat uses energy in quick bursts. Meat protein provides energy. Nothing builds a cat's body and keeps it in peak condition better. And there's more protein from animal-based ingredients in Iams, which means it contains more meat than even the leading supermarket or specialty dry cat food.

KITTEN FOOD
IAMS

< Kitten Food: For kittens from weaning until 12 months old.



< Cat Food: For normally active adult cats.

LESS ACTIVE
FOR CATS
IAMS

< Less Active: For overweight, spayed or neutered adult cats.

MORE MEAT MATTERS™

IAMS® CAT FOOD

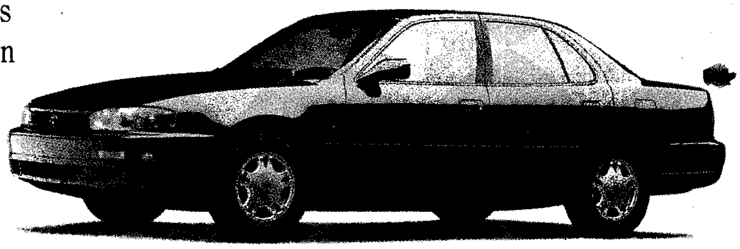
Iams is available only through leading pet supply stores, feed stores, veterinarians and other pet professionals. For the store nearest you call 1-800-255-4738.

CAMRY XLE What if a car were designed not merely to meet your needs, but to thoughtfully anticipate them? That's the luxury of the 1993 Toyota Camry XLE V6.

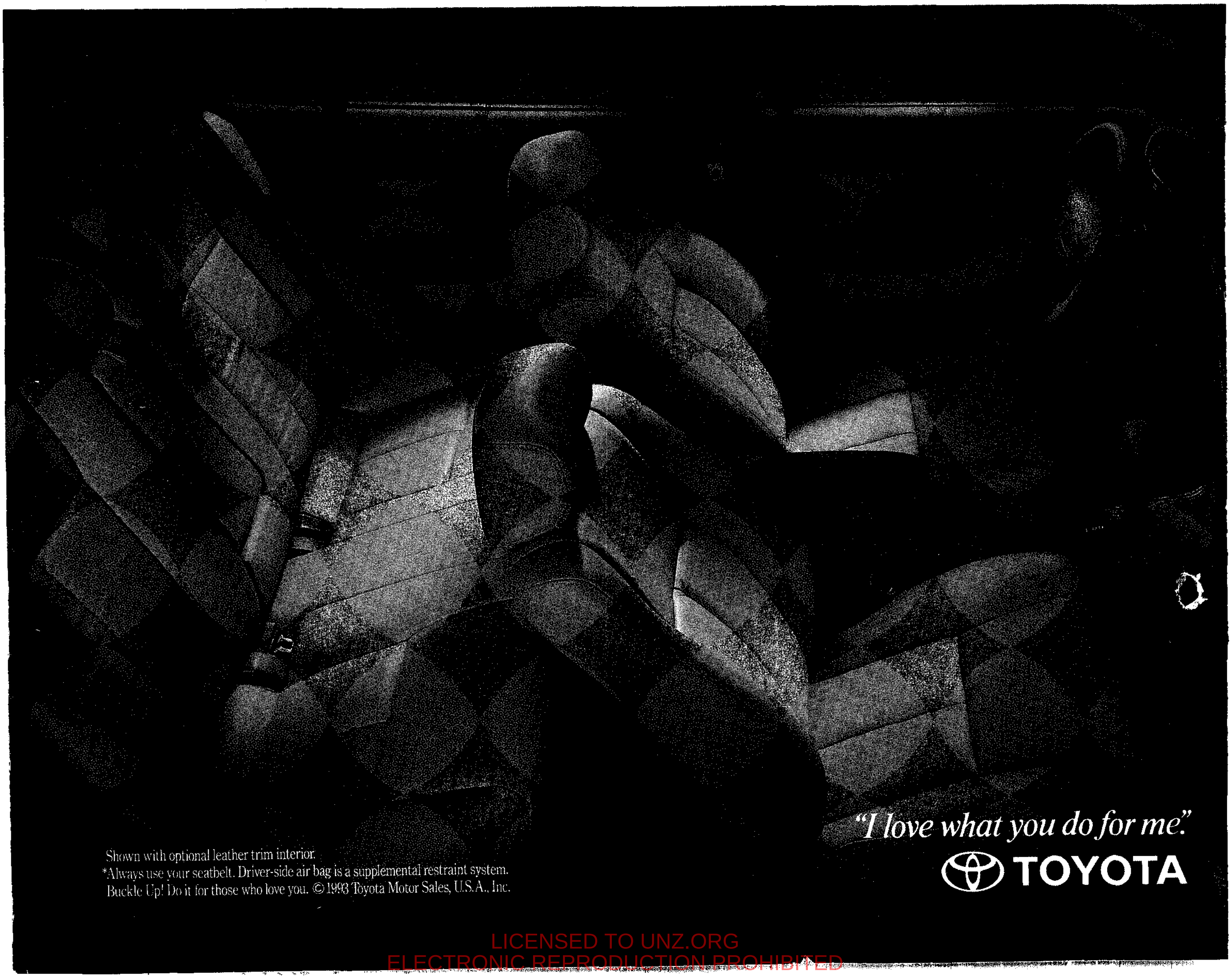
Beginning with a power driver's seat that adjusts seven ways. Air conditioning with soft-touch climate controls. A power glass moonroof that tilts or slides to let as little or as much of the outside world in. There's even an illuminated entry system that slowly dims the dome light to give you time to get settled. Every one standard. Nice touch.

All of which is quite civilized compared to what lies under the hood. A 24-valve, 185-horsepower V6. Not to mention the reassurance of both a driver-side air bag* standard and available Anti-lock Brakes.

Of course, the nicest touch of all is something you won't find anywhere else. Toyota's legendary quality. Call 1-800-GO-TOYOTA for a brochure and location of your nearest dealer.



IT'S NOT HOW MANY TOUCHES A CAR HAS. IT'S HOW IT TOUCHES YOU.



Shown with optional leather trim interior.
*Always use your seatbelt. Driver-side air bag is a supplemental restraint system. Buckle Up! Do it for those who love you. © 1993 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.

"I love what you do for me."
TOYOTA